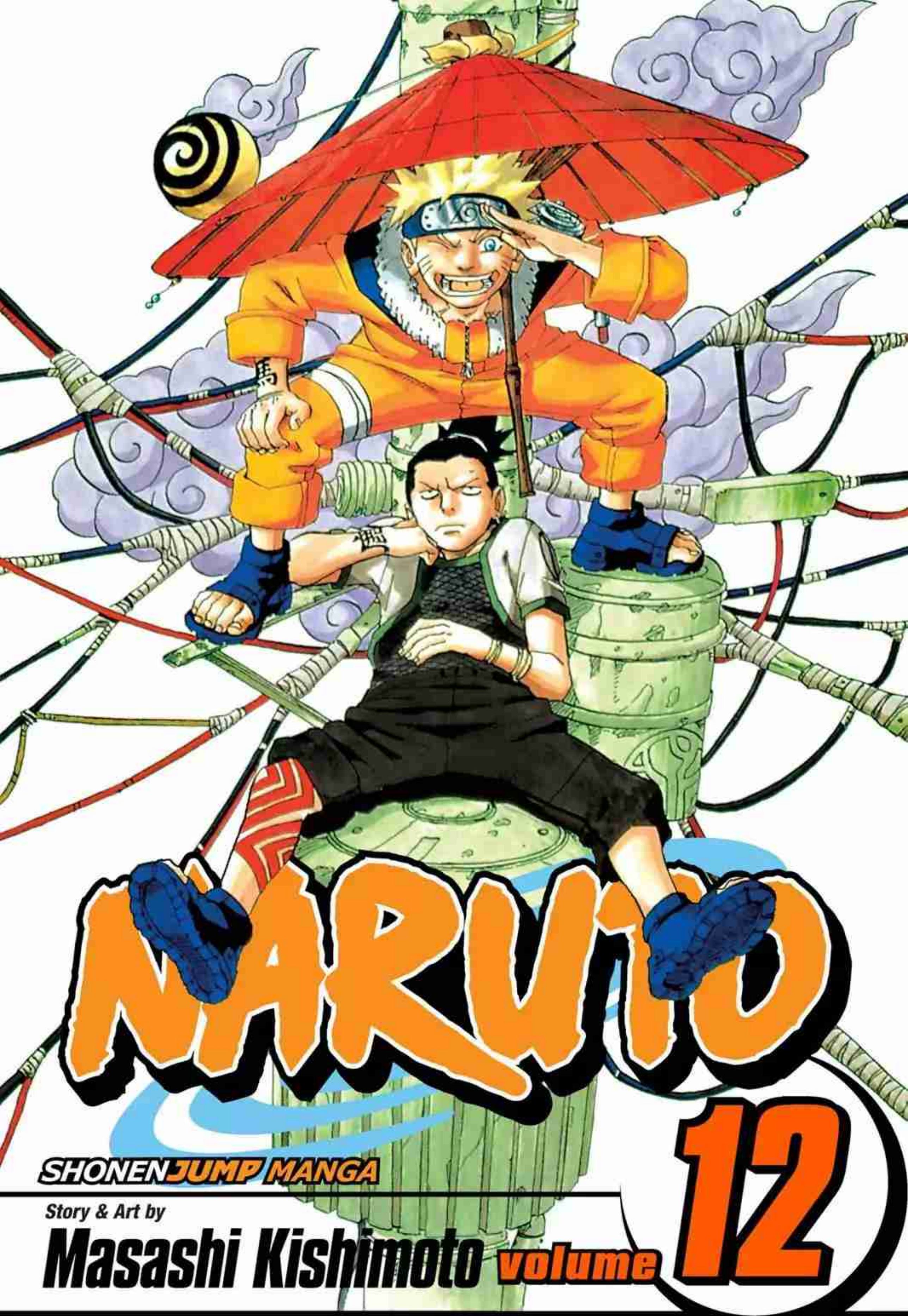
NARUTO
SHONEN JUMP MANGA
Story & Art by
Masashi Kishimoto
volume 12

岸本斉史

Recently, DVDs have become prominent at movie rental stores. Certainly, DVDs are nice because unlike videotapes, you can just rent one disc and not have to choose what kind of audio track you want or whether you want subtitles or not until right when you watch it. That's really great, but...DVDs don't include coming attractions before the main feature. That's what I was looking forward to...

—*Masashi Kishimoto, 2002*

Author/artist Masashi Kishimoto was born in 1974 in rural Okayama Prefecture, Japan. After spending time in art college, he won the Hop Step Award for new manga artists with his manga **Karakuri** (Mechanism). Kishimoto decided to base his next story on traditional Japanese culture. His first version of **Naruto**, drawn in 1997, was a one-shot story about fox spirits; his final version, which debuted in **Weekly Shonen Jump** in 1999, quickly became the most popular ninja manga in Japan.

NARUTO VOL. 12
SHONEN JUMP Manga Edition

This graphic novel contains material that was originally published in English in **SHONEN JUMP** #45–47. Artwork in the magazine may have been slightly altered from that presented here.

STORY AND ART BY MASASHI KISHIMOTO

Translation & English Adaptation/Mari Morimoto
Touch-up Art & Lettering/Heidi Szykowny
Additional Touch-up/Josh Simpson
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PARENTAL ADVISORY
NARUTO is rated T for Teen and is recommended for ages 13 and up. This volume contains tobacco use and realistic and fantasy violence.

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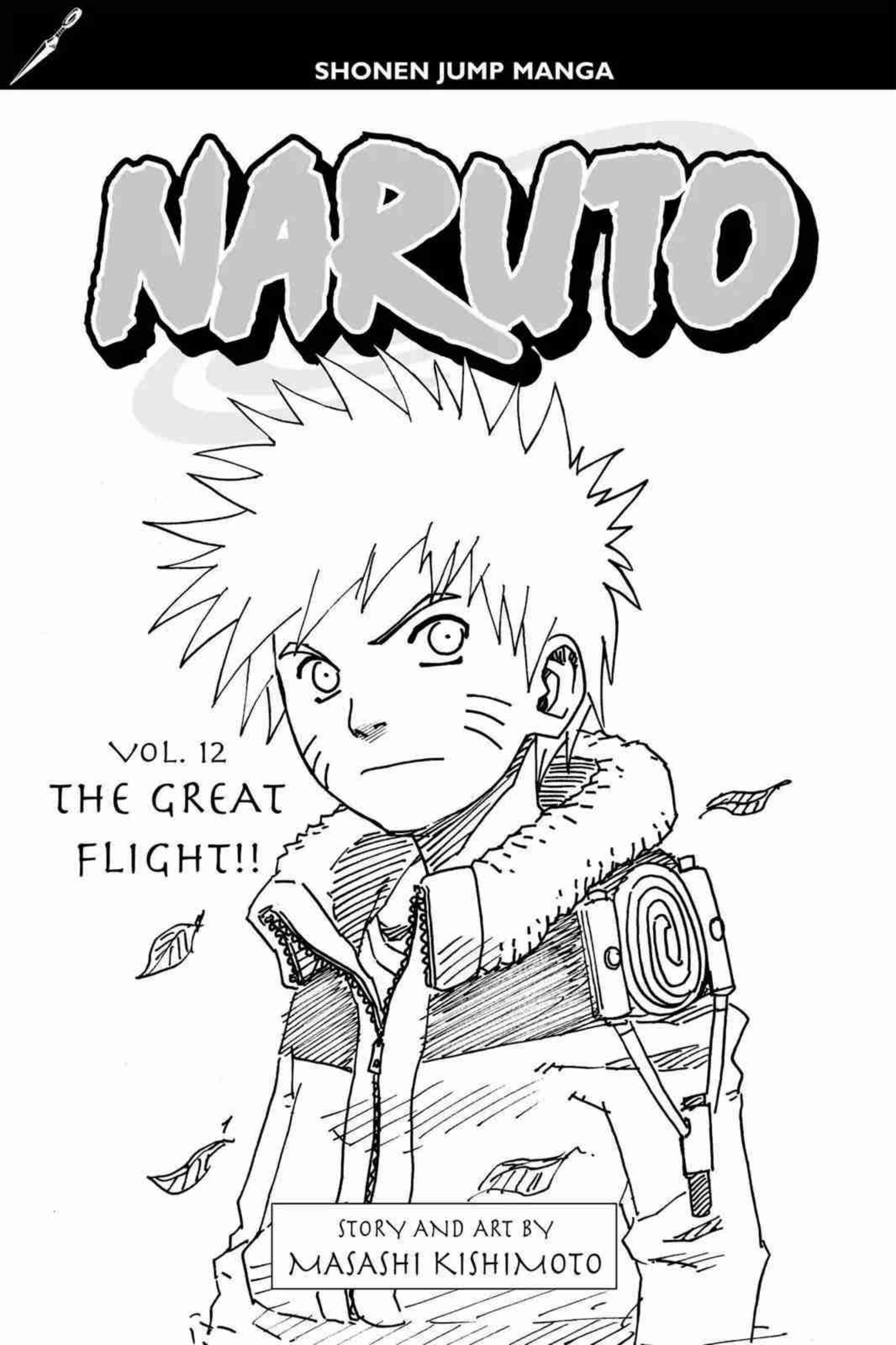
SHONEN JUMP MANGA

NARUTO



VOL. 12

THE GREAT FLIGHT!!

STORY AND ART BY
MASASHI KISHIMOTO

SAKURA サクラ

Smart and studious, Sakura is the brightest of Naruto's classmates, but she's constantly distracted by her crush on Sasuke. Her goal: to win Sasuke's heart!

NARUTO ナルト

When Naruto was born, a destructive fox spirit was imprisoned inside his body. Spurned by the older villagers, he's grown into an attention-seeking trouble-maker. His goal: to become the village's next *Hokage*.

SASUKE サスケ

The top student in Naruto's class, Sasuke comes from the prestigious Uchiha clan. His goal: to get revenge on a mysterious person who wronged him in the past.

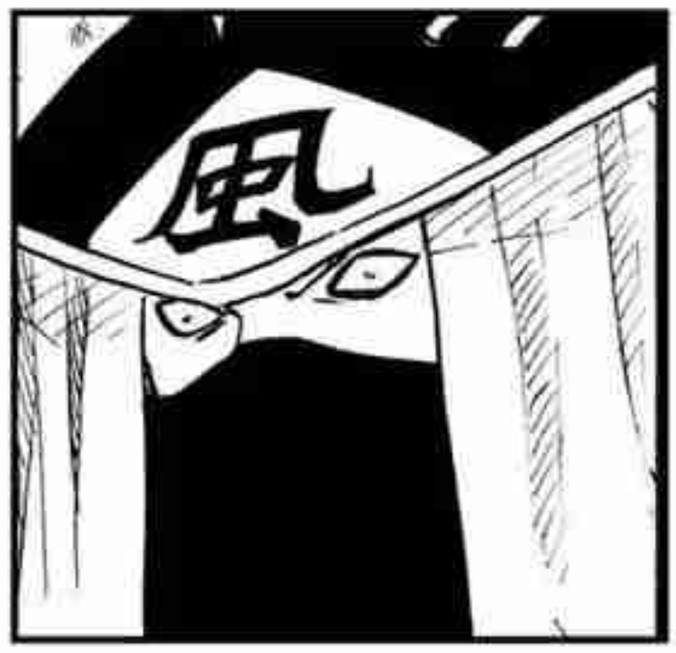
Neji ネジ
Part of the Cadet Branch of the Hyuga Clan, as opposed to the Main Branch to which Hinata belongs. Neji is widely considered to be a genius.

Gaara 我愛羅
Bloodthirsty Gaara is one of the scariest ninja competing in the Chûnin exams.

Shikamaru シカマル
One of Naruto's classmates. He specializes in the Shadow Possession jutsu, and is a skilled ninja despite his lazy demeanor.

Hyuga Hiashi
日向ヒアシ
The head of the main branch of the Hyuga family and Neji's uncle.

Hokage 火影
The leader of Konohagakure. He was retired, but stepped back into the position when the fourth Hokage was killed by the nine-tailed fox spirit.



Kazekage 風影
The leader of Sunagakure (the Village Hidden in the Sand) within the Land of Wind.

THE STORY SO FAR...

Twelve years ago, a destructive nine-tailed fox spirit attacked the ninja village of Konohagakure. The *Hokage*, or village champion, defeated the fox by sealing its soul into the body of a baby boy. Now that boy, Uzumaki Naruto, has grown up to become a ninja-in-training, learning the art of *ninjutsu* with his teammates Sakura and Sasuke.

The preliminaries of the Third Exam are over and Sasuke, Shino, Kankuro, Temari, Shikamaru, Naruto, Neji, Gaara and Dosu have all passed and remain in the running. During the month of preparation time before the finals, Naruto trains with Jiraiya and brilliantly manages to draw out the Nine-Tailed Fox's chakra. The final round begins amid the swirling intrigue of Orochimaru and company. In the first battle, Naruto squares off against Neji, but…?!

NARUTO

VOL. 12
THE GREAT FLIGHT!!

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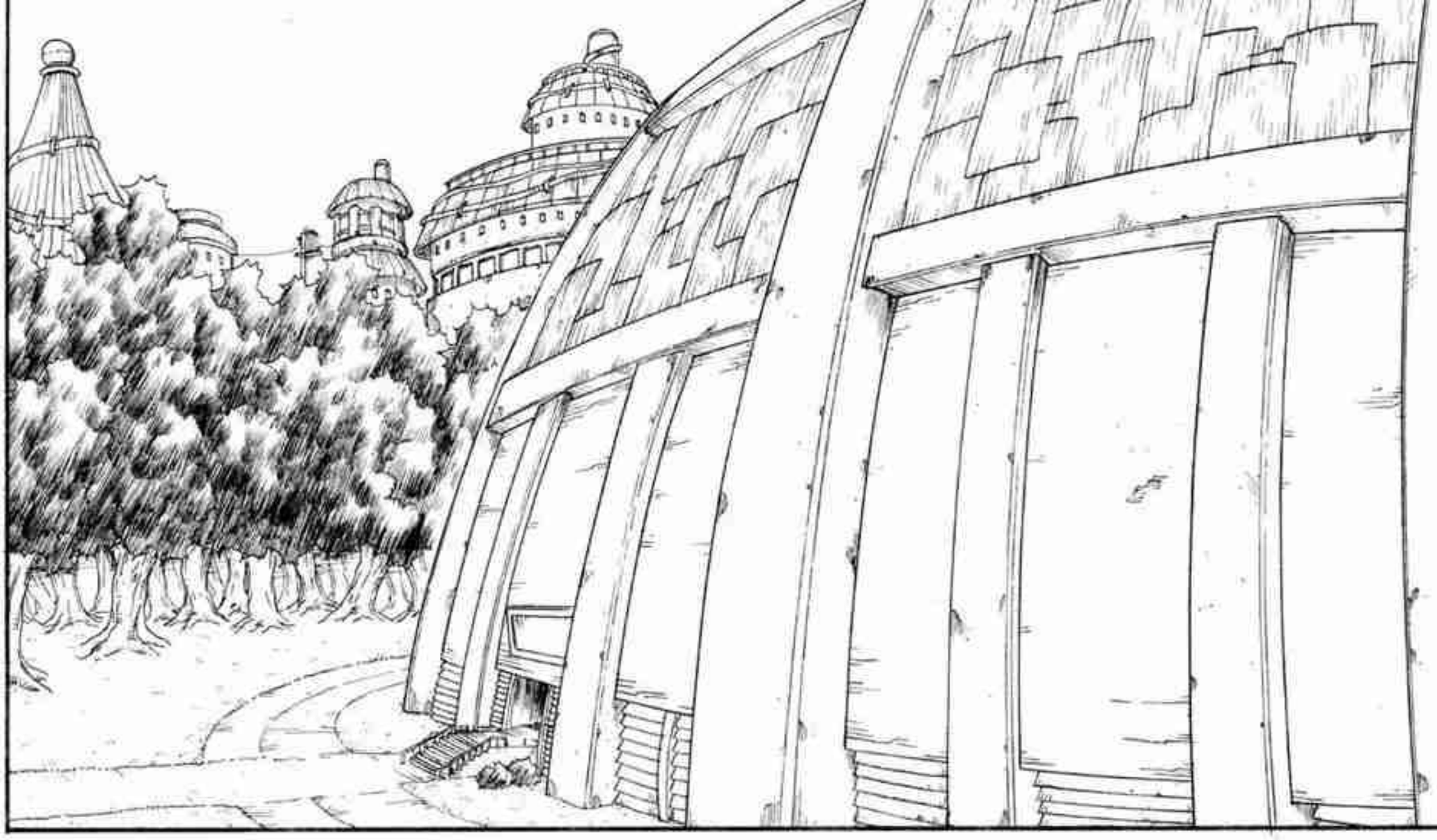
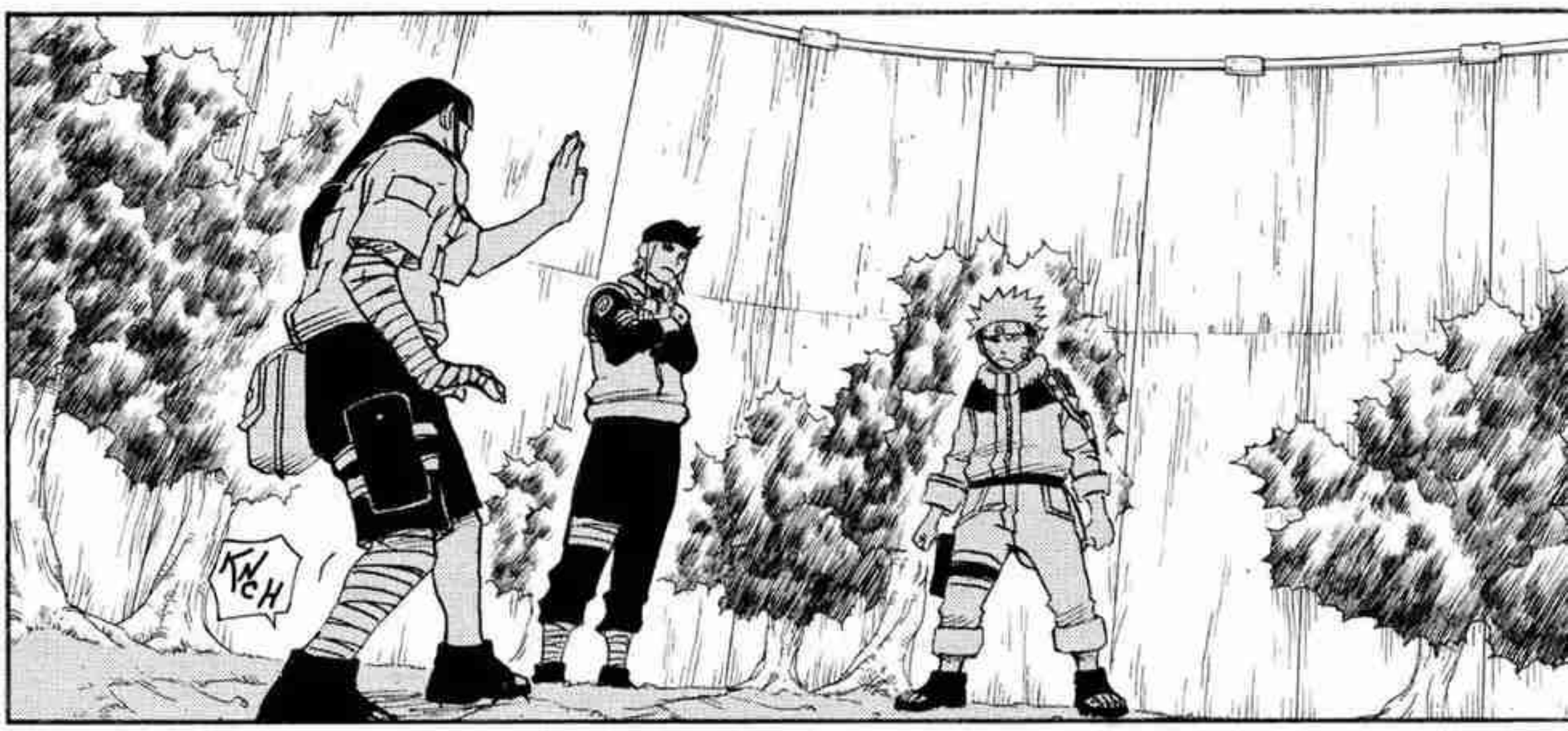



KWCH

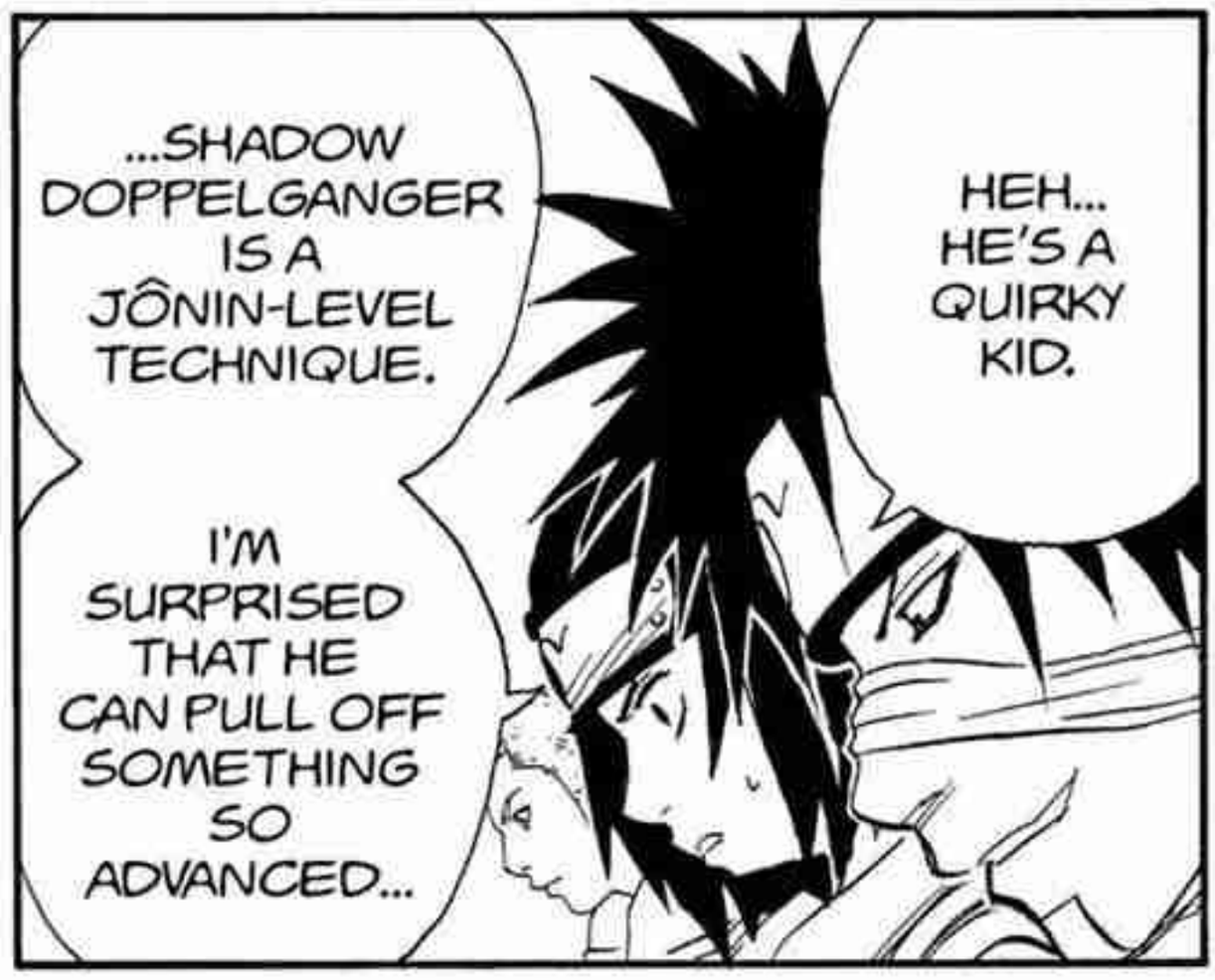
I HOPE NARUTO REMEMBERS... WITH THIS GUY, CLOSE COMBAT IS A BAD IDEA...!

NEJI CAN SEE THE TENKE-TSU...
YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO WIN WITH A FART THIS TIME, NARUTO.

CLEAR
SSSLIP
THESE NODES ARE CALLED TENKETSU... AND, IN THEORY, IF YOU CAN ACCURATELY HIT THEM...
...YOU CAN HALT THE FLOW OF AN ENEMY'S CHAKRA, OR ENHANCE IT, CONTROLLING IT IN ANY WAY YOU WISH.
...
FW UP
SO I'VE GOT TO FIGHT HIM FROM A DISTANCE...
IN OTHER WORDS, IF I GET TOO CLOSE TO HIM, HE'LL PRESS MY POINTS AND I WON'T BE ABLE TO USE ANY JUTSU...
!

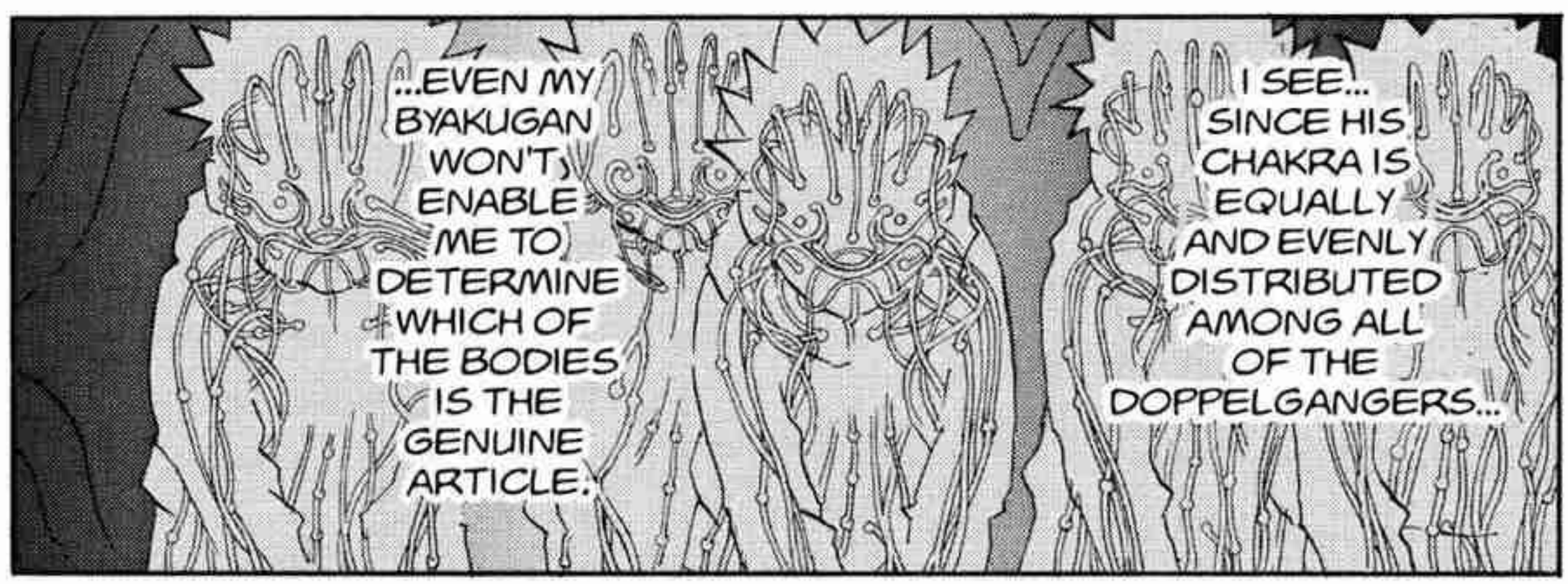
KAGE-BUNSHIN NO JUTSU! ART OF THE SHADOW DOPPEL-GANGER!!!
ON
G
SNATCH

...SHADOW DOPPEL-GANGERS ?!
Pop


...SHADOW DOPPELGANGER IS A JÔNIN-LEVEL TECHNIQUE.
I'M SURPRISED THAT HE CAN PULL OFF SOMETHING SO ADVANCED...
HEH... HE'S A QUIRKY KID.

THIS IS GONNA BE INTERESTING...

GOOD THINKING, NARUTO! SHADOW DOPPEL-GANGERS ARE IDEAL...


...EVEN MY BYAKUGAN WON'T ENABLE ME TO DETERMINE WHICH OF THE BODIES IS THE GENUINE ARTICLE.
I SEE... SINCE HIS CHAKRA IS EQUALLY AND EVENLY DISTRIBUTED AMONG ALL OF THE DOPPELGANGERS...

...IT'S USELESS... NEJI'S DEFENSE IS PERFECT...

HEH... DON'T BE TOO CONFI-DENT!
THEN COME AT ME... IF YOU DARE...

BUT... IN THE END, THERE IS ONLY ONE ACTUAL BODY.

...ME, OKAY?!

...UNDER-ESTIMATE...

DON'T...

HEY!

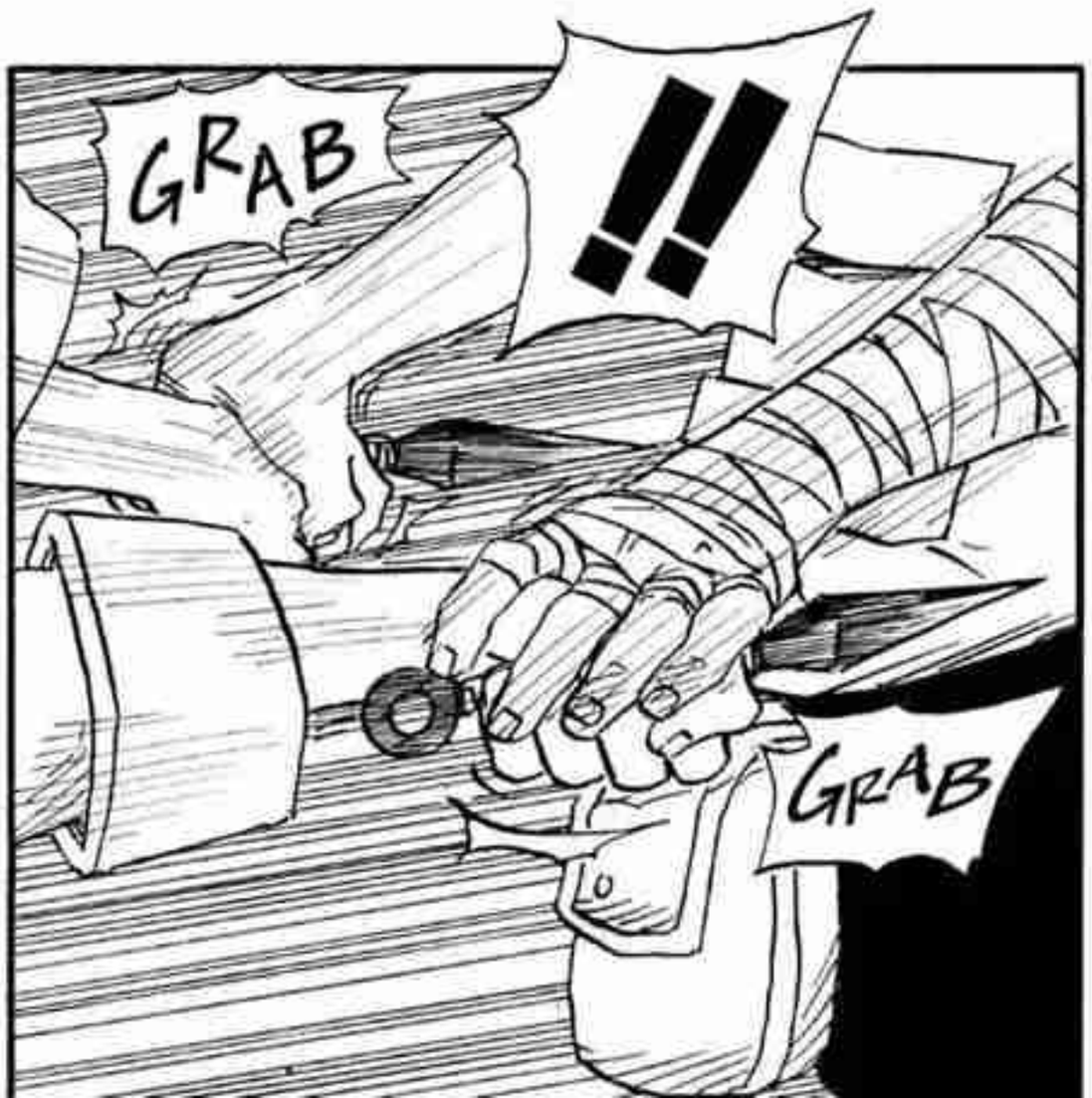
TAK
TAK
KNCH

DASH
OVER HERE!!
SLUMP
DASH
LEAP
SWING
TAP
SQUASH
WHIRL

CLOBBER

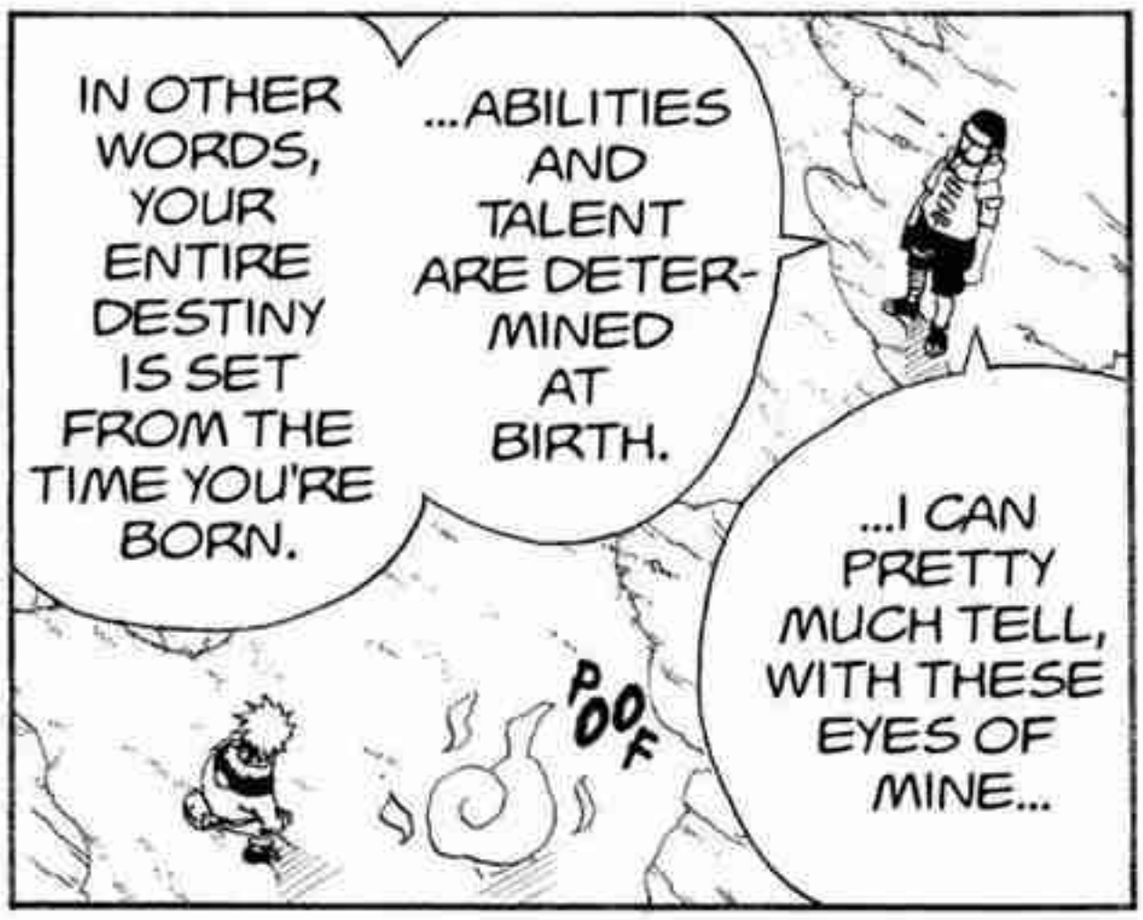
GRR!

ARGH!!



UGH!
KRAK
KRAK
THUP
THUP
WHOP

WHAT THE...? DOES HE HAVE EYES ON THE BACK OF HIS HEAD OR SOMETHING?
POOF
SKID

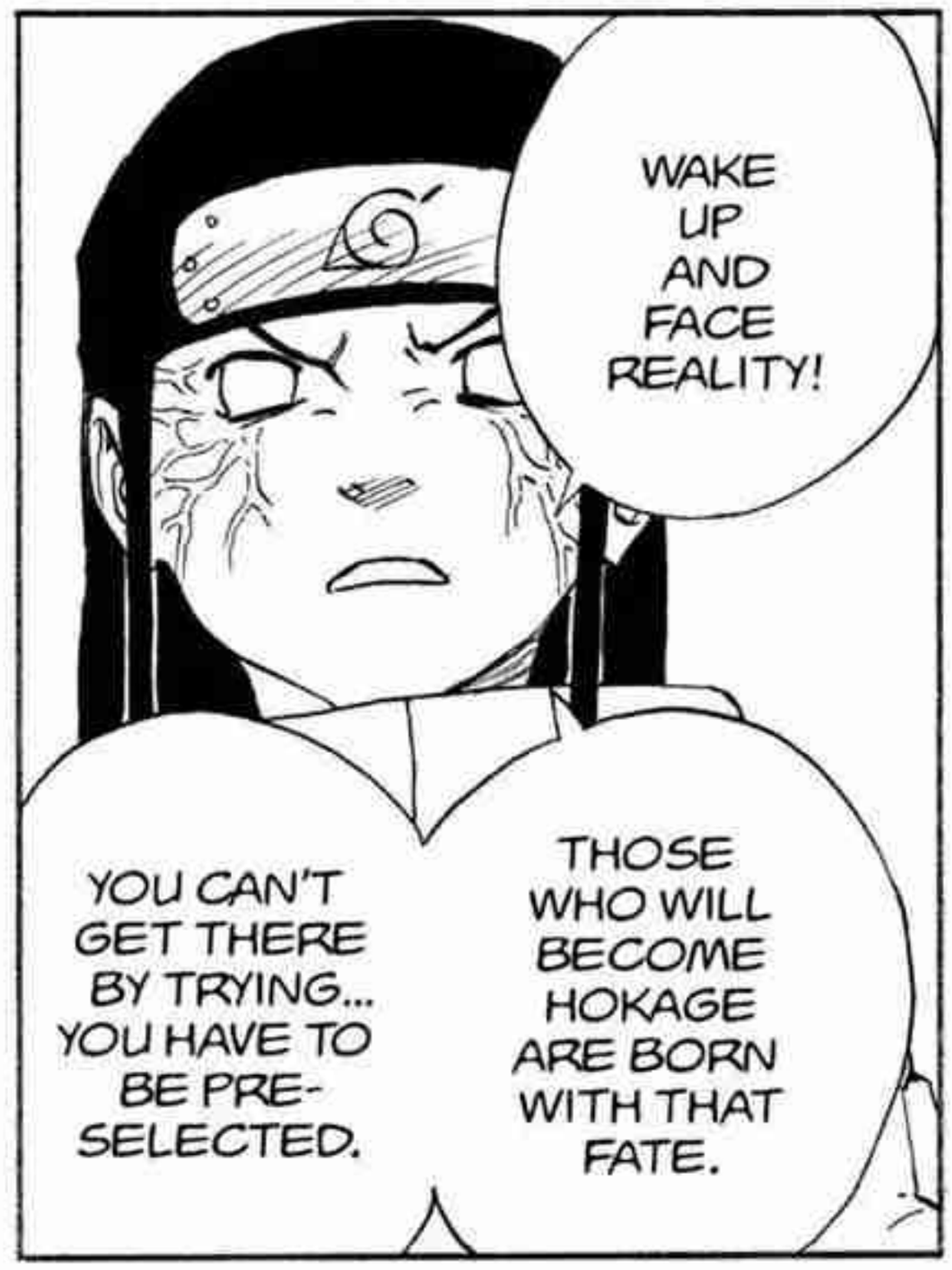

IN OTHER WORDS, YOUR ENTIRE DESTINY IS SET FROM THE TIME YOU'RE BORN.
...ABILITIES AND TALENT ARE DETERMINED AT BIRTH.
...I CAN PRETTY MUCH TELL, WITH THESE EYES OF MINE...
POOF

I DON'T THINK THAT'S GONNA HAPPEN.
...YOU WANT TO BE HOKAGE, HUH?

...
WELL... ARE YOU SAYING THAT ANYONE CAN BECOME HOKAGE... IF THEY JUST TRY HARD ENOUGH?
ONLY A SELECT FEW SHINOBI ARE EVEN CONSIDERED FOR HOKAGE.

WHY ARE YOU SO STUBBORN?! YOU'RE ALWAYS SO SURE THAT THE FUTURE IS FULL OF DOOM AND GLOOM...
WHY?!

...
EACH PERSON'S LIFE CONSISTS ONLY OF BEING SWEPT ALONG IN THE INESCAPABLE CURRENT OF HIS DESTINY...

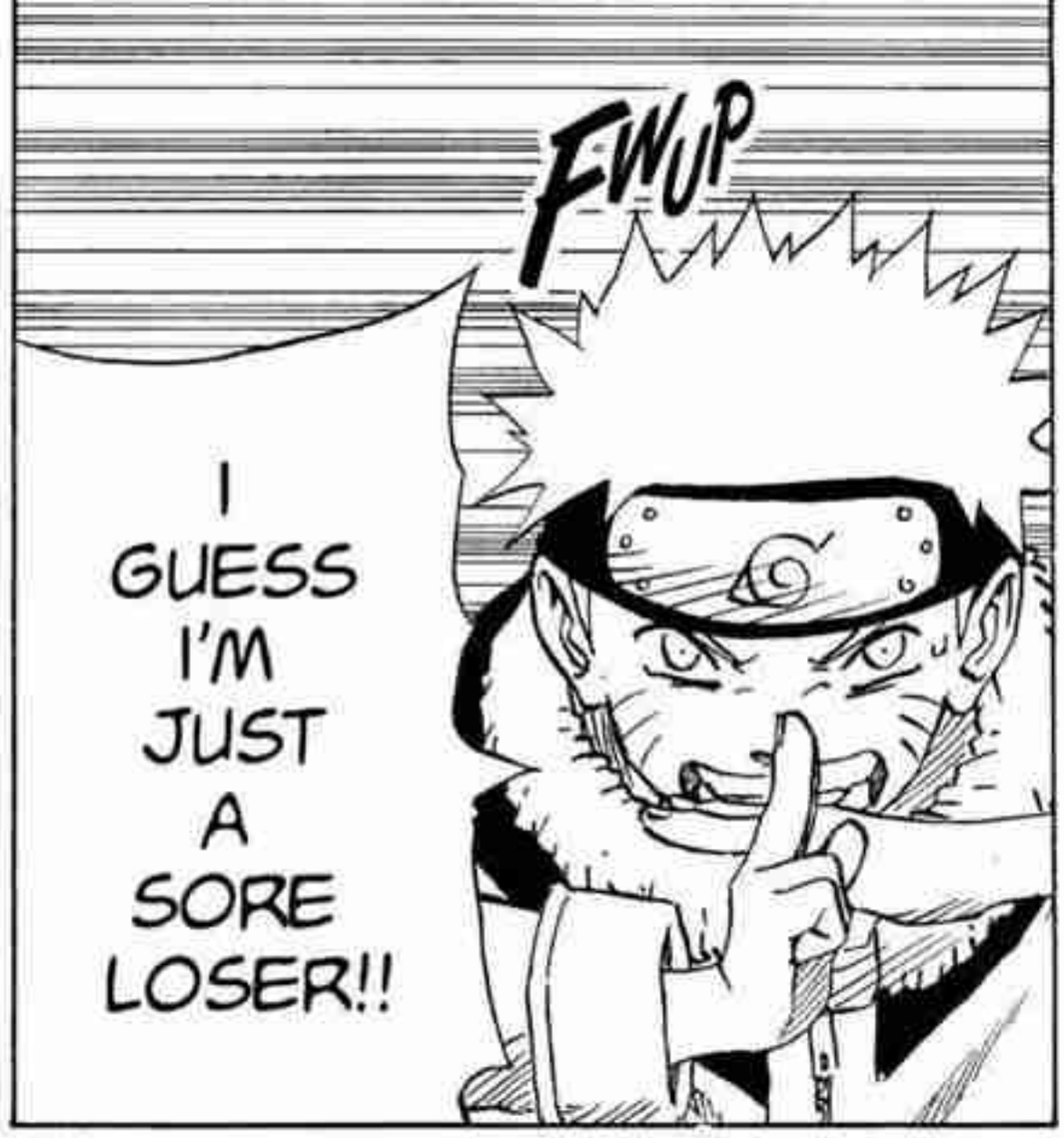

WAKE UP AND FACE REALITY!
YOU CAN'T GET THERE BY TRYING... YOU HAVE TO BE PRE-SELECTED.
THOSE WHO WILL BECOME HOKAGE ARE BORN WITH THAT FATE.

...HAVE ONLY ONE THING IN COMMON... ONE SHARED FATE...
ALL OF US...

...DEATH.

...HIS GRUDGE AGAINST THE FAMILY'S MAIN BRANCH IS STILL STRONG...
...THOSE EYES...

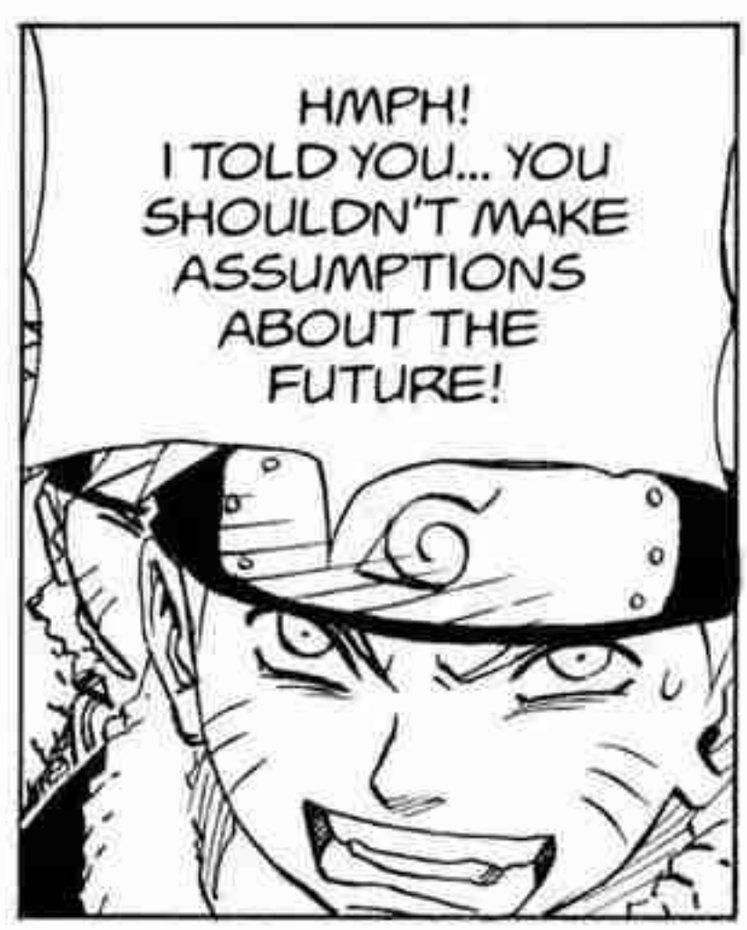
...


FWUP
I GUESS I'M JUST A SORE LOSER!!

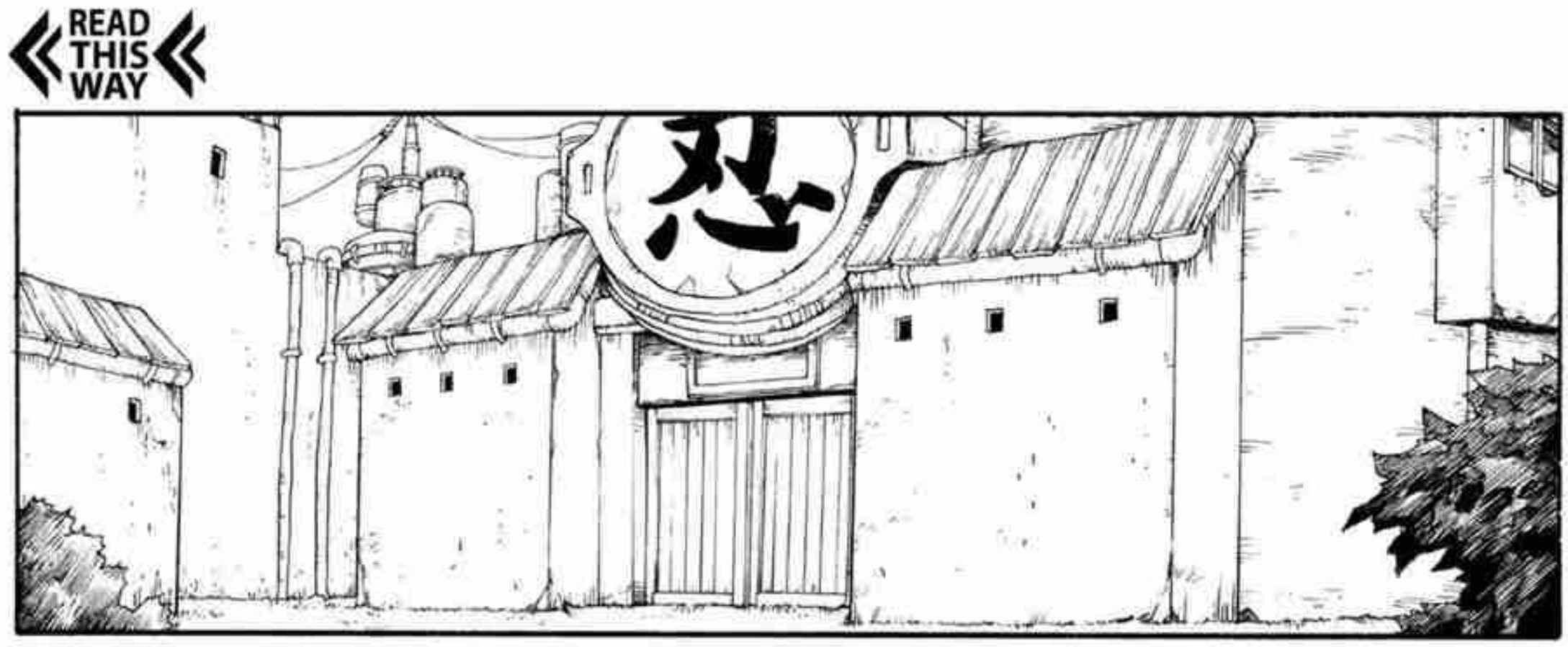
WELL... SO WHAT?!

ONINS

THAT FOOL... IF HE KEEPS MAKING SO MANY DOPPELGANGERS, HE'LL RUN OUT OF CHAKRA IN NO TIME...


HMPH! I TOLD YOU... YOU SHOULDN'T MAKE ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT THE FUTURE!

I'VE SEEN THROUGH YOUR PATTERN OF ATTACK ALREADY.
I'M NOT AN IDIOT, YOU KNOW.


READ THIS WAY
忍

THE FINALS ARE NOTHING LIKE THE PRELIMINARIES... I WONDER IF NARUTO IS REALLY UP TO IT...
HE'S UP AGAINST NEJI...?

SIGH...

I HOPE YOU CAN AT LEAST GIVE ME A GOOD SHOW, NARUTO...
SHF

I'VE GOT QUITE A TOUGH JOB AHEAD OF ME...

DASH
RROAR!
GR

SWIFF

SKF
SKF
DARN! I'M NOT LANDING ANY HITS!!
SKF

SLASH
HUP

I ALREADY KNOW...
I TOLD YOU... I'M NOT AN IDIOT...

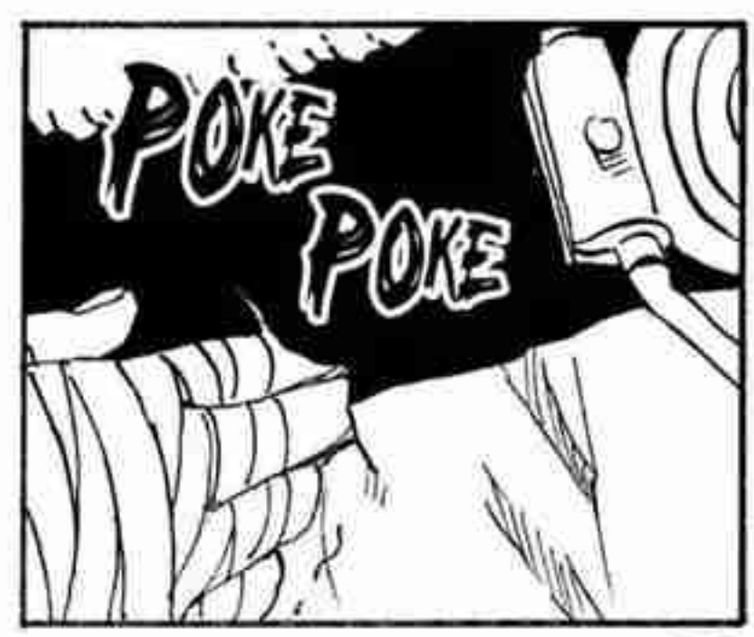
...WHICH ONE IS THE REAL YOU!

SKIDDD

DASH
!

SLAP
UNH!

THE MORE THE OTHERS ATTACK, THE MORE THAT ONE STANDS OUT...
POOF
POOF
...THE ONE WHO HANGS BACK, AFRAID TO GET CLOSE... FEARING ANY STRIKE ON HIS TENKETSU...


POKE
POKE

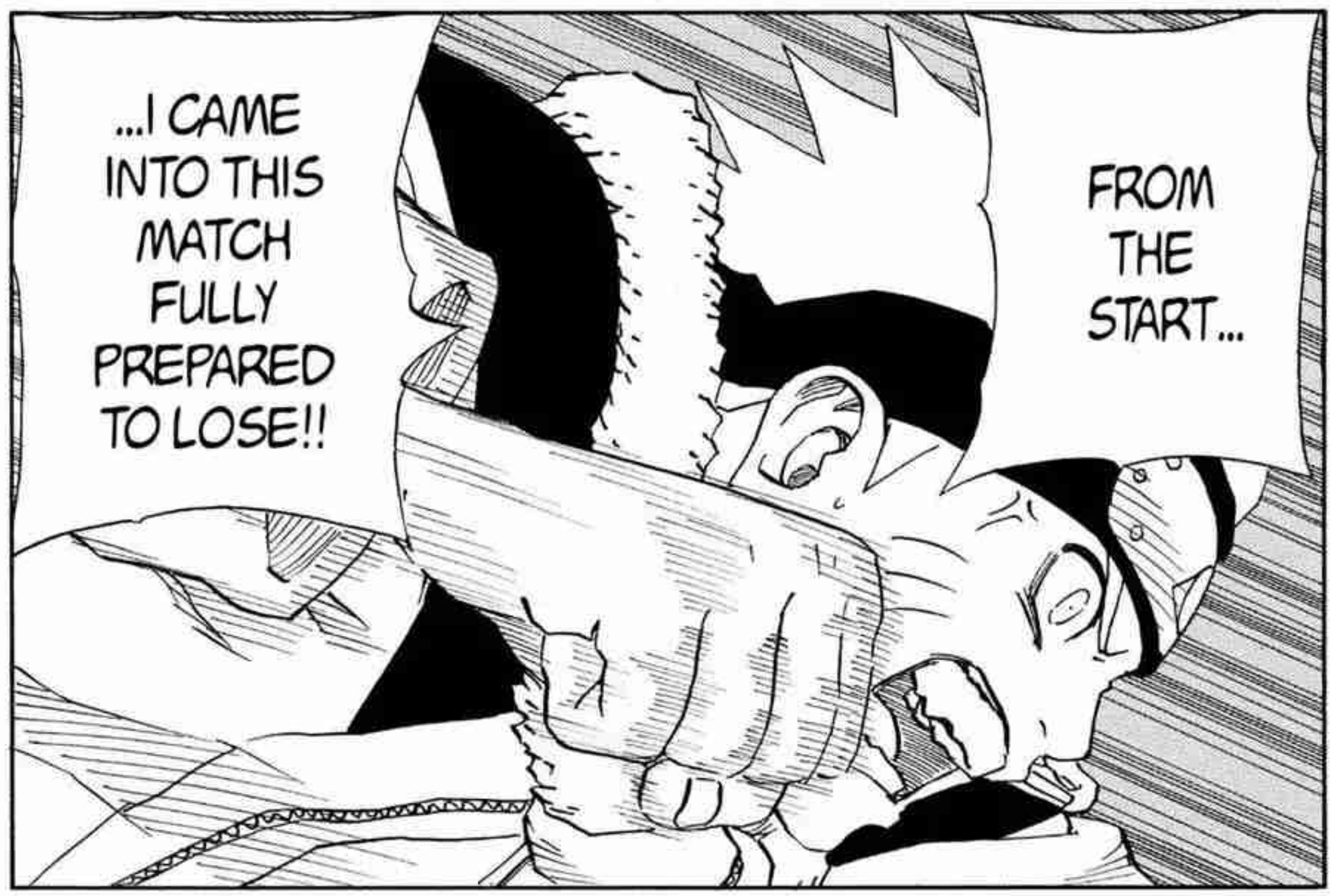
TWITCH
TWITCH
YOU'RE THE REAL ONE!!
POOF

WHAT?!

POOF

READ
THIS
WAY

...TOWARD ONE OF HIS DOPPEL-GANGERS?!
HE ANTICIPATED MY THOUGHTS AND... HE DELIBERATELY STEERED ME...


...I CAME INTO THIS MATCH FULLY PREPARED TO LOSE!!
FROM THE START...

NEJI...

A MESSAGE FROM KISHIMOTO MASASHI TO ALL OF HIS ASSISTANTS

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT'S ALREADY BEEN OVER TWO YEARS SINCE WE STARTED WORKING ON *NARUTO*! I WANT TO EXPRESS MY SINCERE GRATITUDE TO ALL OF YOU, WHO ALWAYS LISTEN SILENTLY TO MY SELFISH, UNREASONABLE DEMANDS AND CATER TO MY EVERY WHIM.
I HAVE BECOME KEENLY AWARE OF THE FACT THAT MANGA IS NOT SOMETHING ONE PERSON CAN CREATE ALL BY HIMSELF. I HONESTLY BELIEVE THAT YOUR HARD WORK IS WHAT HAS ALLOWED *NARUTO* TO COME THIS FAR WHILE MAINTAINING SUCH HIGH STANDARDS OF QUALITY. I TRULY THANK YOU FOR EVERY SINGLE WEEK WE'VE WORKED TOGETHER!!

AND SO, TO ALL OF YOU READERS OUT THERE... STARTING WITH THE NEXT BONUS PAGE, PLEASE ENJOY THE COMMEMORATIVE *NARUTO* SECOND ANNIVERSARY DRAWINGS BY MY INSPIRING AND DEDICATED ASSISTANTS!

HYAAAH!!

Number 101: The Other...!!

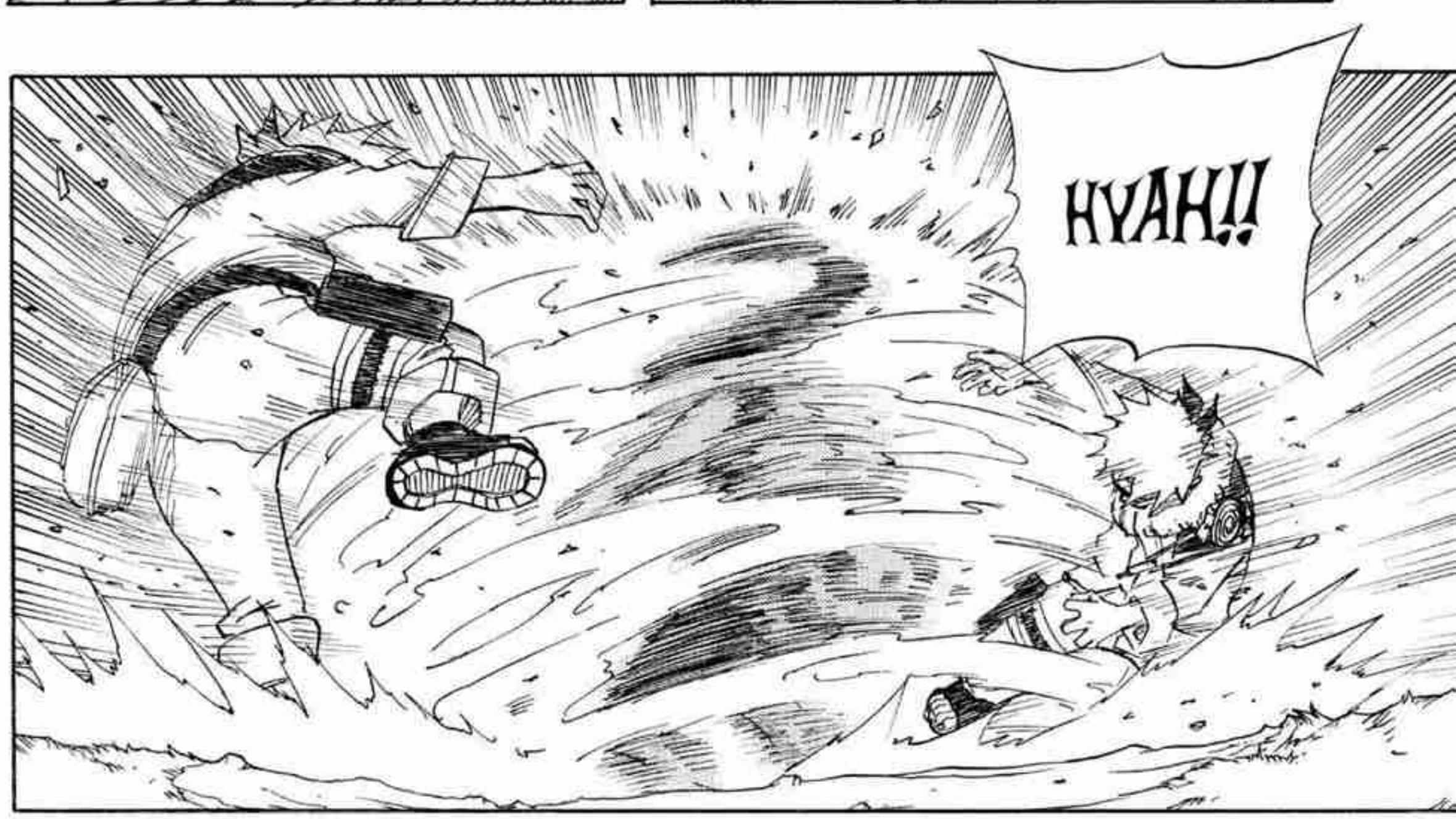
Number 101:

The Other...!!

ガバ
!

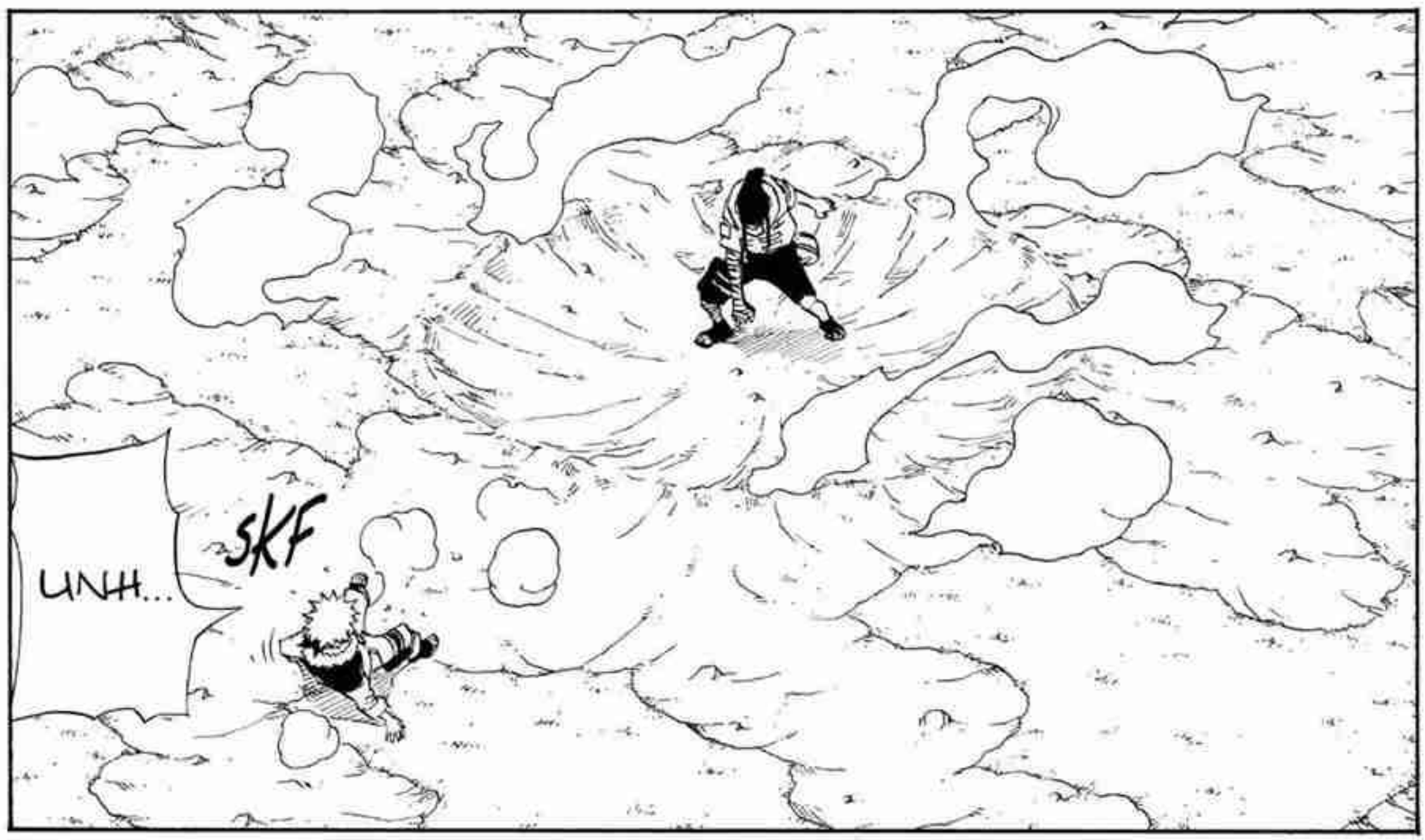
HUH?!

?!



SKIDDD

SKID
POOF


UNH...
SKF

WH-WHAT THE HECK JUST HAP-PENED ?!

!!

...
UNBELIEV-
ABLE...

YOU
THOUGHT...
...YOU
HAD
ME
BEAT?

...THAT'S...!
KOFF
KOFF...

I KNOW
NARUTO
LANDED
THAT
PUNCH!
WHAT'S
GOING
ON?!

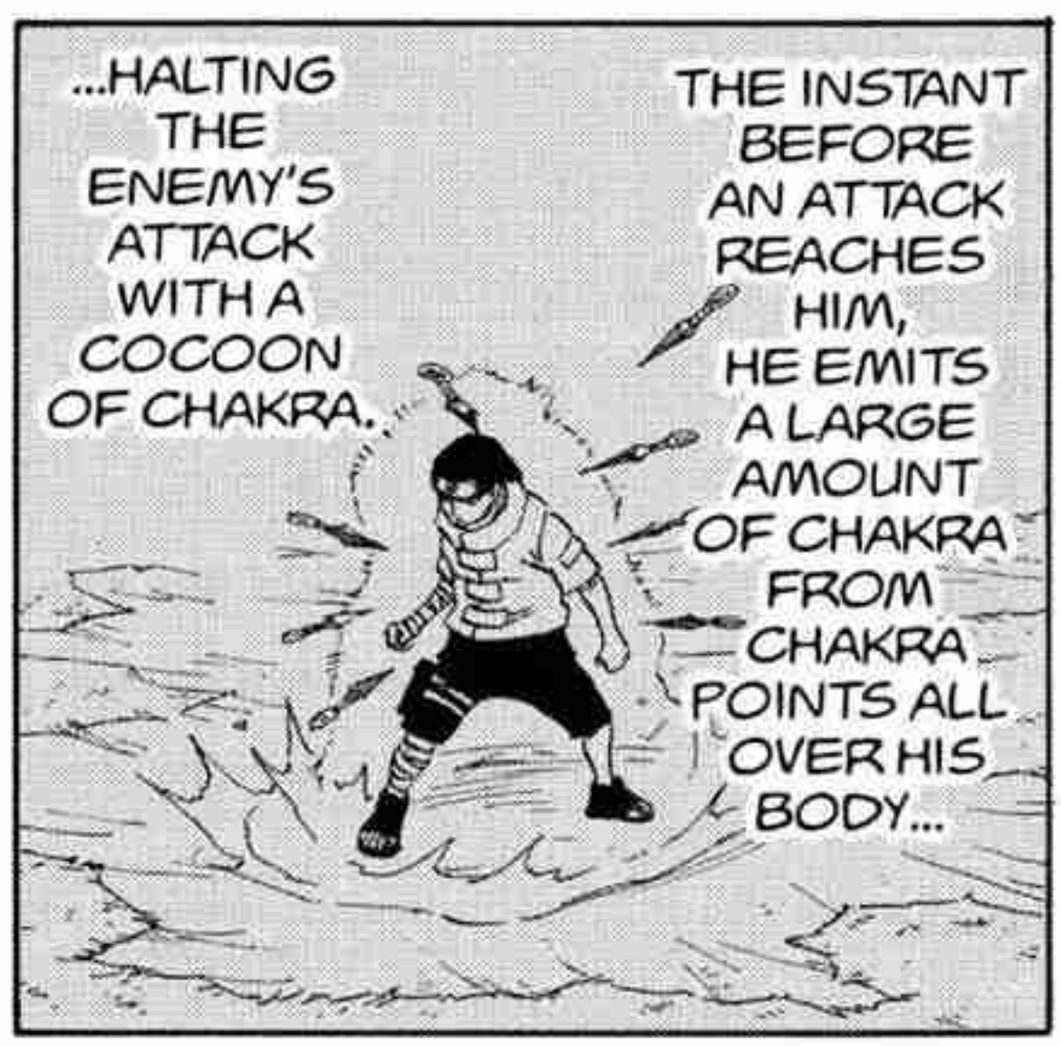
HEH
HEH...
THAT'S
NEJI'S
DEFENSE...

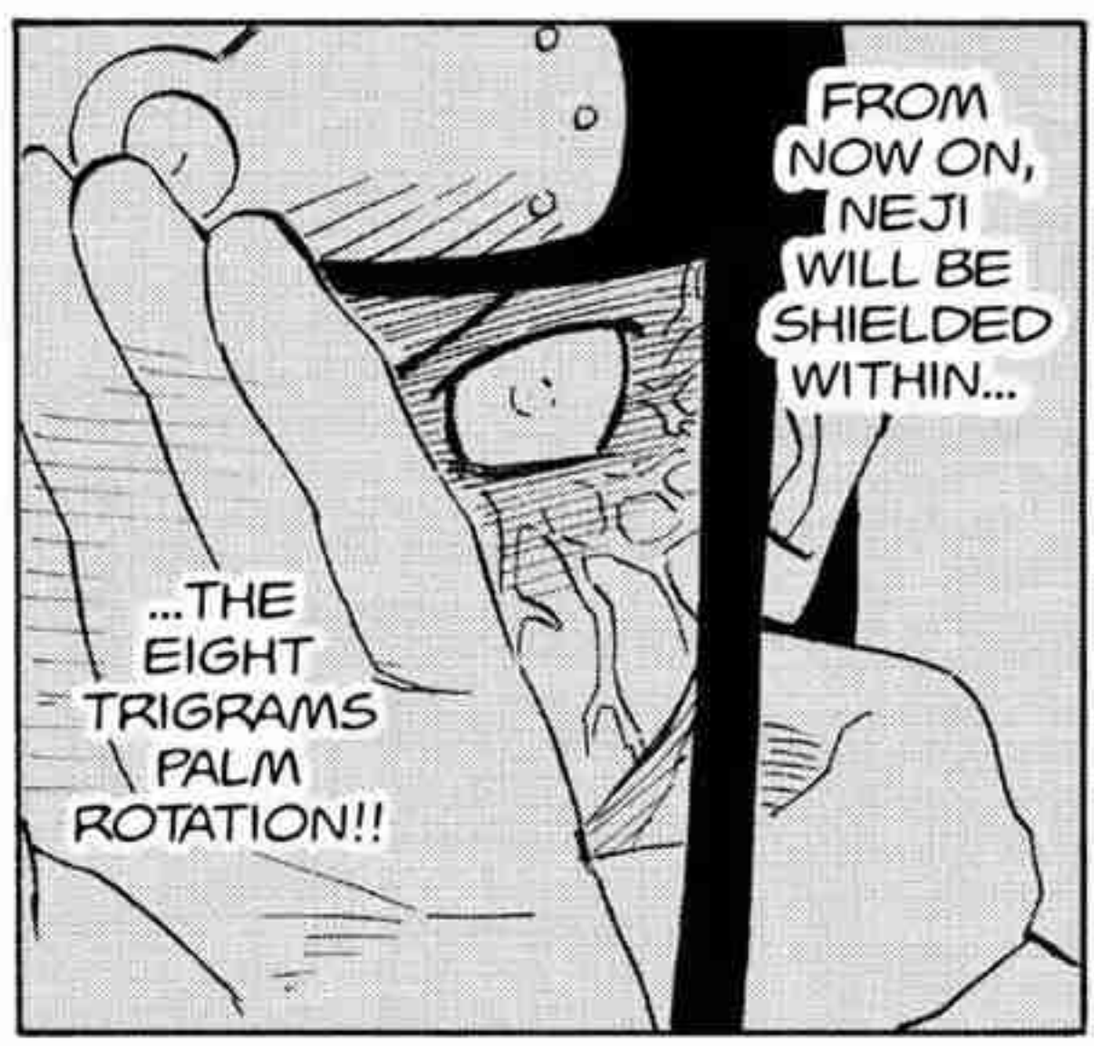
...
ROTATION
...!

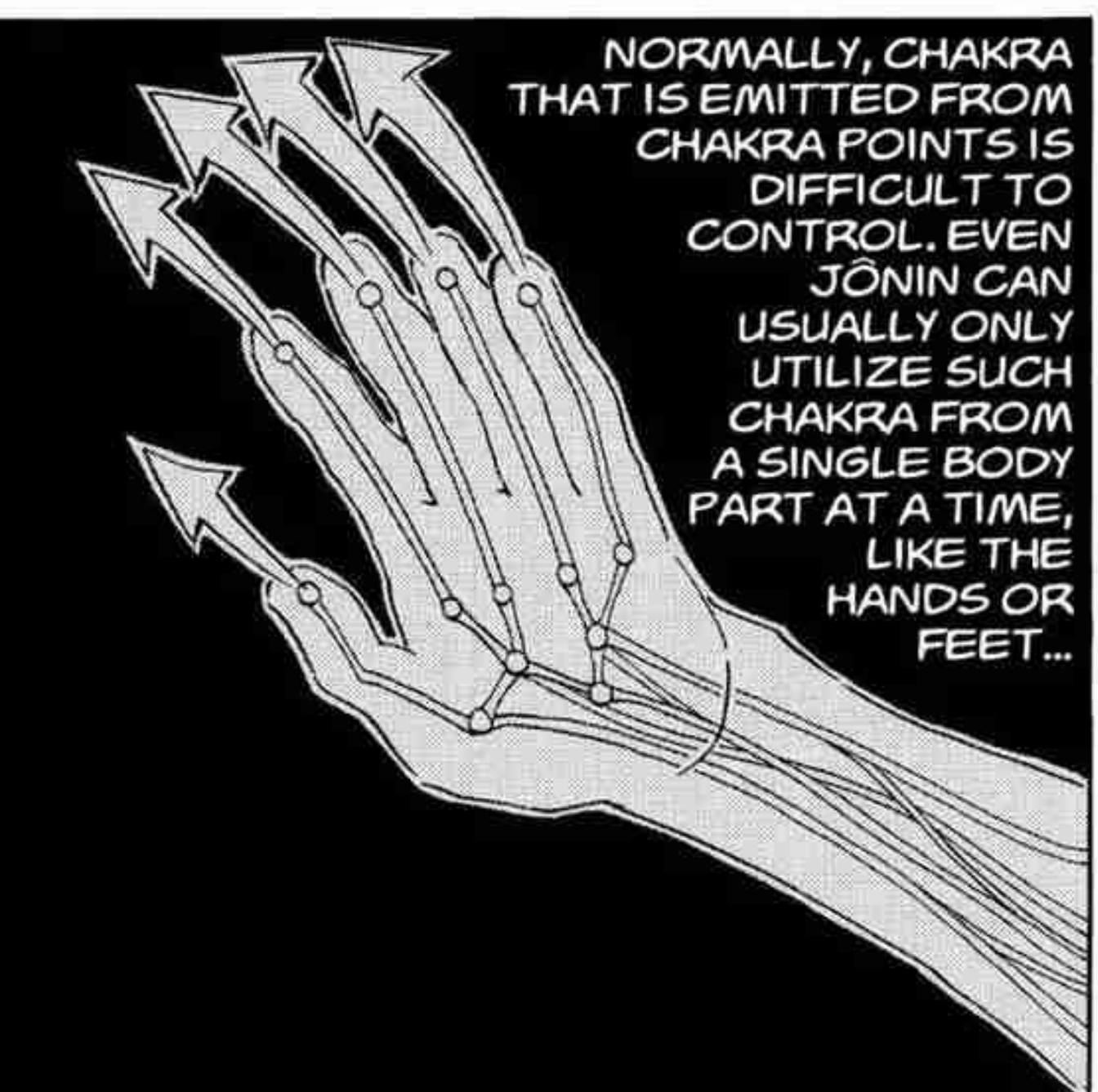
...AND WITH THAT SAME ALL-SEEING EYE, HE CAN ANTICIPATE ALL OF HIS OPPONENT'S ATTACKS...

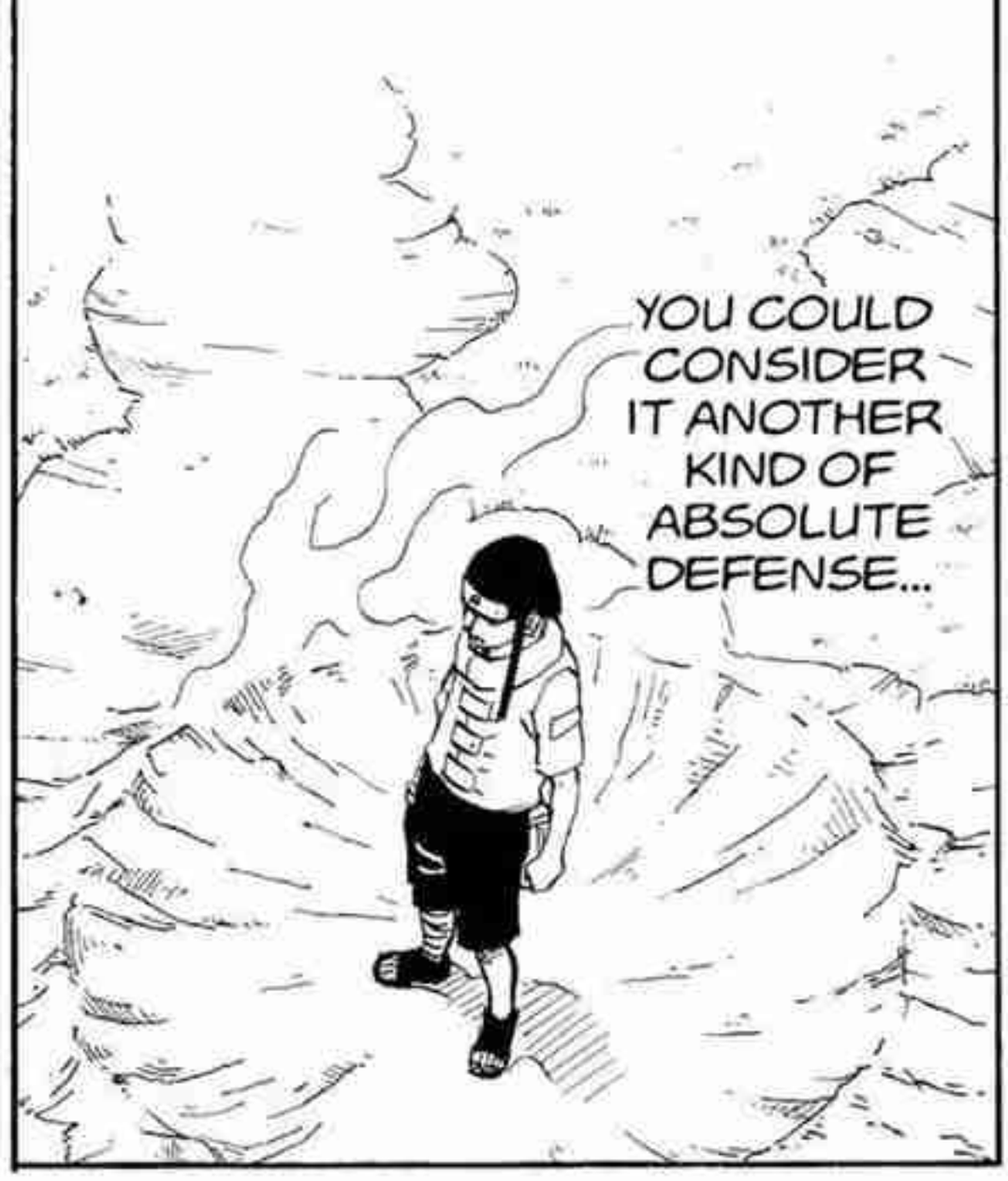
THE VISUAL RANGE OF NEJI'S BYAKUGAN IS ALMOST A FULL 360 DEGREES... IN OTHER WORDS, HE CAN PRETTY MUCH SEE A FULL CIRCLE AROUND HIM...

360°





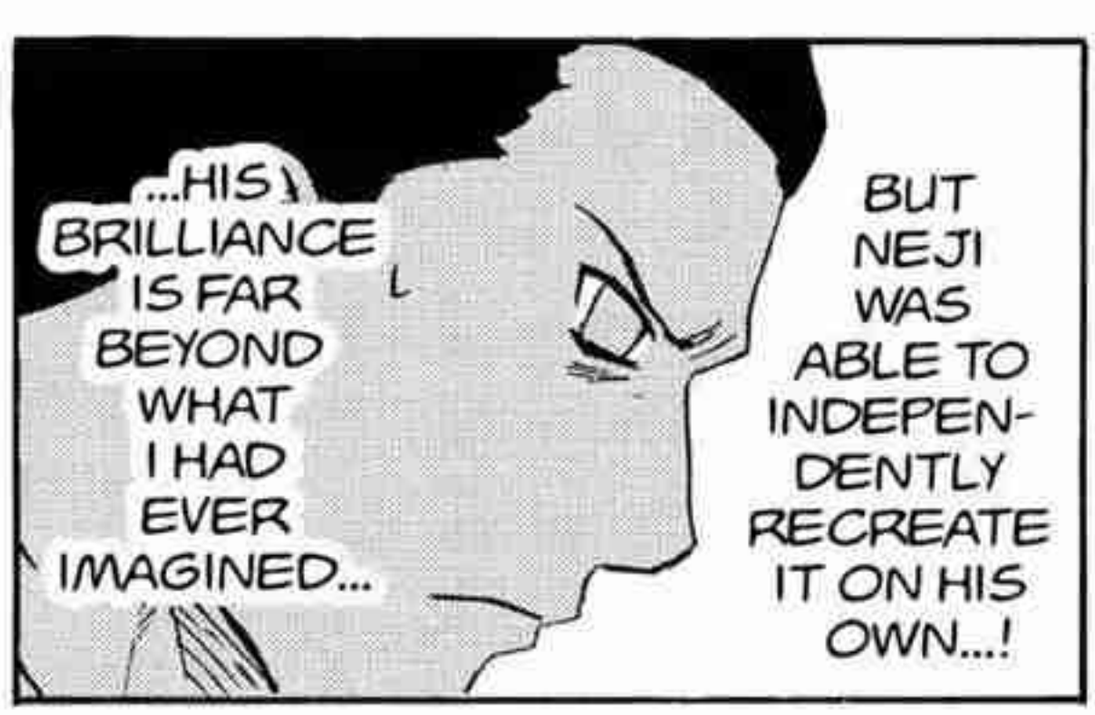



YOU COULD CONSIDER IT ANOTHER KIND OF ABSOLUTE DEFENSE...

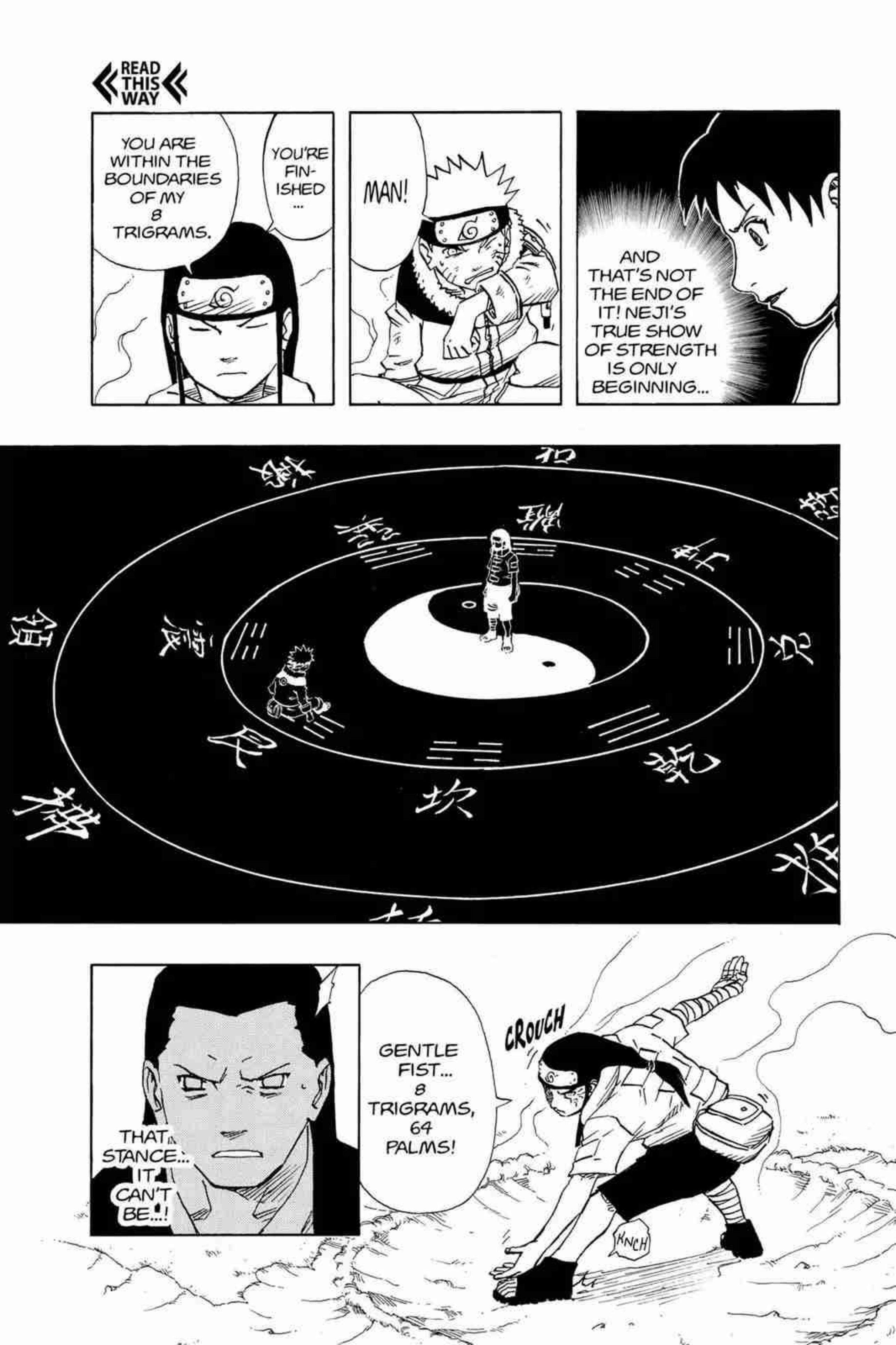
...AND WITH THAT EMITTED POWER ALONE, CAN PHYSICALLY BLOCK ATTACKS...
BUT NEJI, A MASTER OF THE GENTLE FIST, CAN EMIT CHAKRA FROM HIS ENTIRE BODY...

...THAN GAARA'S!!
...THAT'S EVEN MORE POWERFUL...

BLINK


...HIS BRILLIANCE IS FAR BEYOND WHAT I HAD EVER IMAGINED...
BUT NEJI WAS ABLE TO INDEPENDENTLY RECREATE IT ON HIS OWN...!

THE ROTATION IS A SECRET ART THAT IS PASSED DOWN ONLY WITHIN THE HYUGA MAIN BRANCH... TAUGHT BY THE HEAD OF THE FAMILY TO THE HEIR ALONE...
...TH-THAT'S YOUR...


READ THIS WAY
YOU ARE WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF MY 8 TRIGRAMS.
YOU'RE FIN-ISHED ...
MAN!
AND THAT'S NOT THE END OF IT! NEJI'S TRUE SHOW OF STRENGTH IS ONLY BEGINNING...
THAT STANCE... IT CAN'T BE...!
GENTLE FIST... 8 TRIGRAMS, 64 PALMS!
CROUCH
KNCH

!

WHIRL

JAB
UNH!
8 TRIGRAMS, 2 PALMS!
JAB

JAB
8 PALMS!!
4 PALMS!
JAB
JAB
JAB
JAB
AUGH!

READ THIS WAY
32 PALMS!!
JAB JAB
16 PALMS!!
SKID
JAB JAB
64 PALMS!!!
JAB JAB JAB

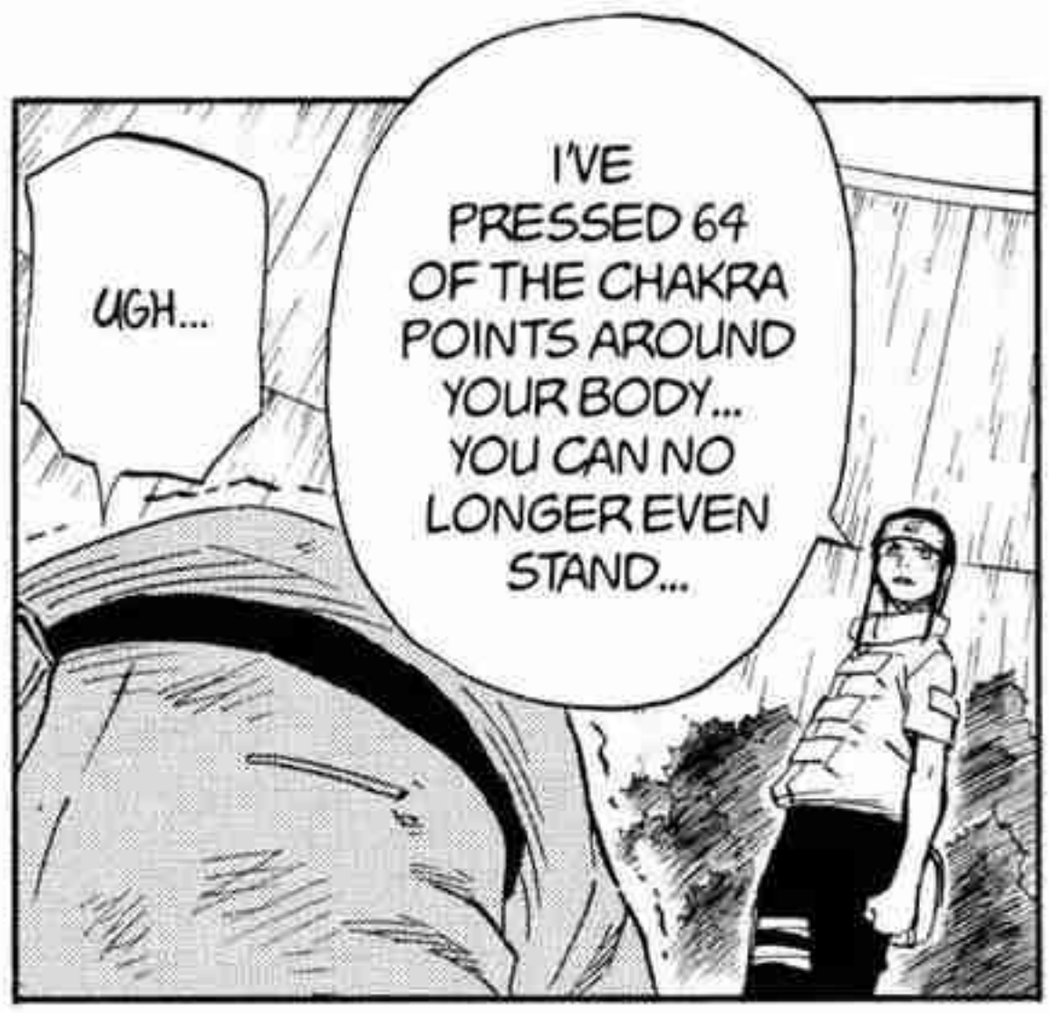
...HAS SURPASSED THE MAIN BRANCH ENTIRELY.
A MEMBER OF THE CADET BRANCH...

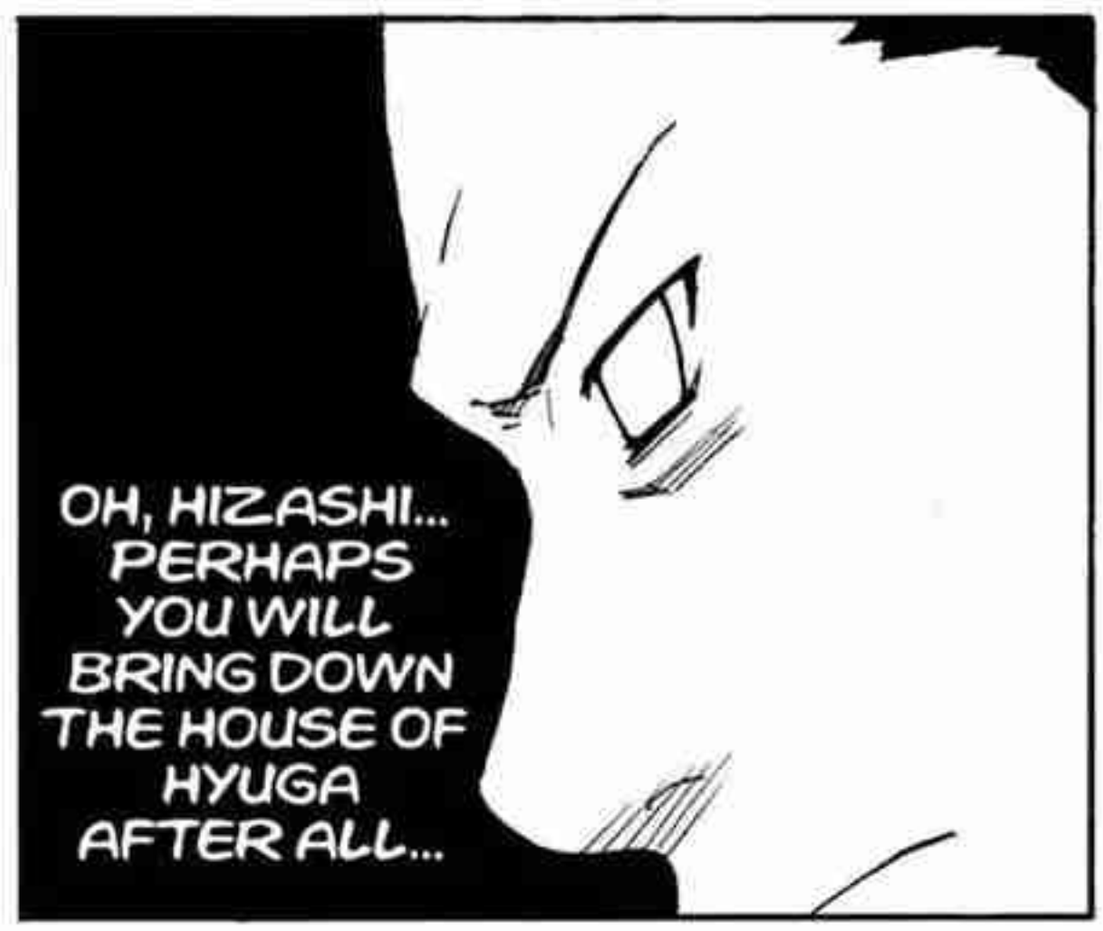
UGH!!
SLAM

...

SO THE DIVINE SHINOBI BLOOD OF THE HYUGA CLAN RESIDES IN A CHILD OF THE CADET BRANCH WHO CAN NEVER BECOME HEIR...?
HE TRULY IS... A FEAR-SOME NATURAL TALENT...

IT'S OVER.


UGH...
I'VE PRESSED 64 OF THE CHAKRA POINTS AROUND YOUR BODY... YOU CAN NO LONGER EVEN STAND...


OH, HIZASHI... PERHAPS YOU WILL BRING DOWN THE HOUSE OF HYUGA AFTER ALL...

TAK
HERE, ON YOUR KNEES BEFORE MY IMMUTABLE STRENGTH... YOU MUST FINALLY COMPREHEND YOUR OWN POWERLESS-NESS!
HEH... IT MUST BE FRUSTRAT-ING...
...UNH...

HEY, HINATA... ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?!
!
HACK HACK...

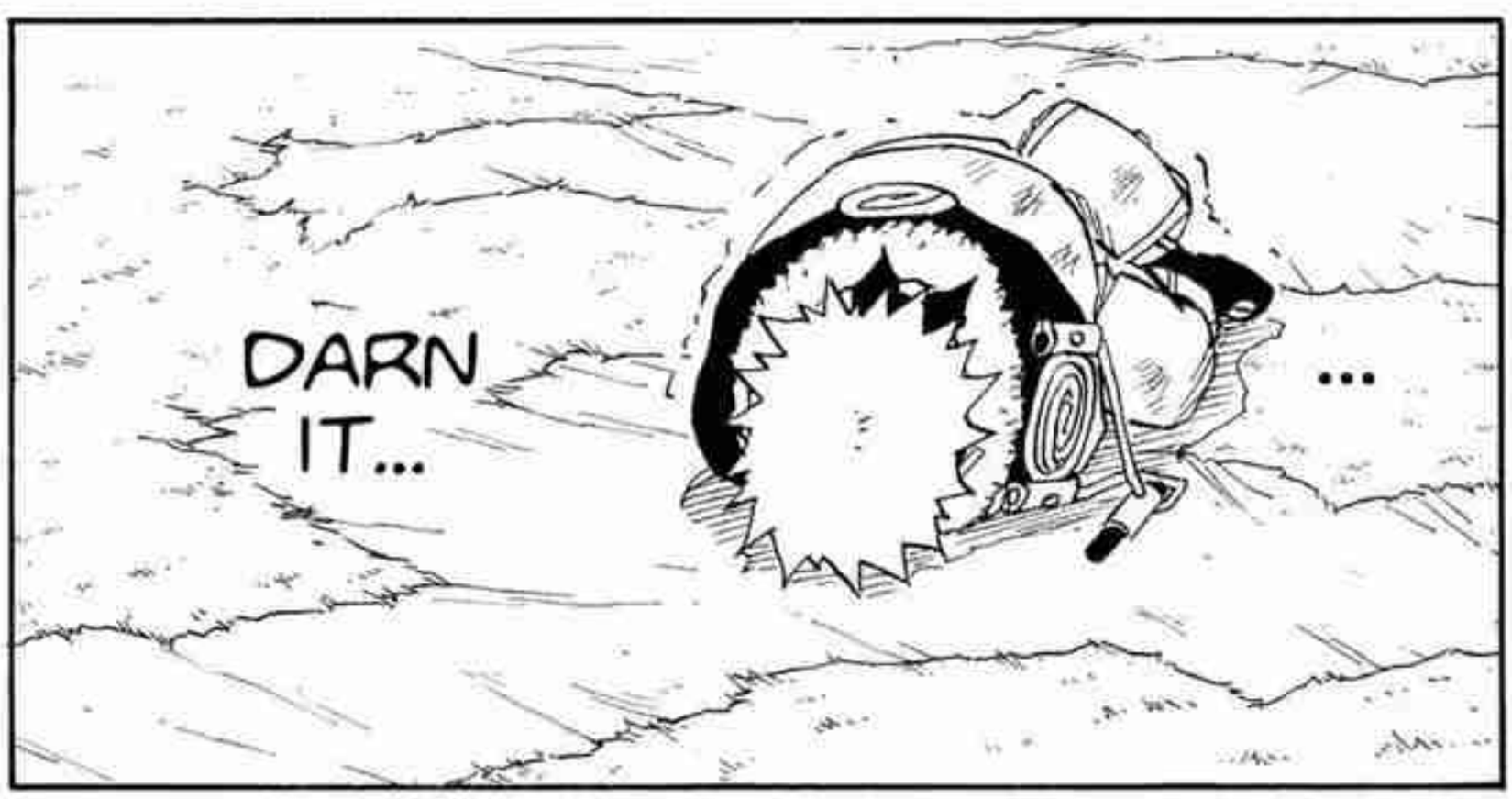
...IT'S SIMPLY A FANTASY.
BELIEVING THAT YOUR DREAMS WILL COME TRUE IF YOU JUST TRY HARD ENOUGH...

...

NARUTO...

N...NARUTO...!!

I KNEW IT...
OH NO...


DARN IT...
...

HUF
HUF
UGK

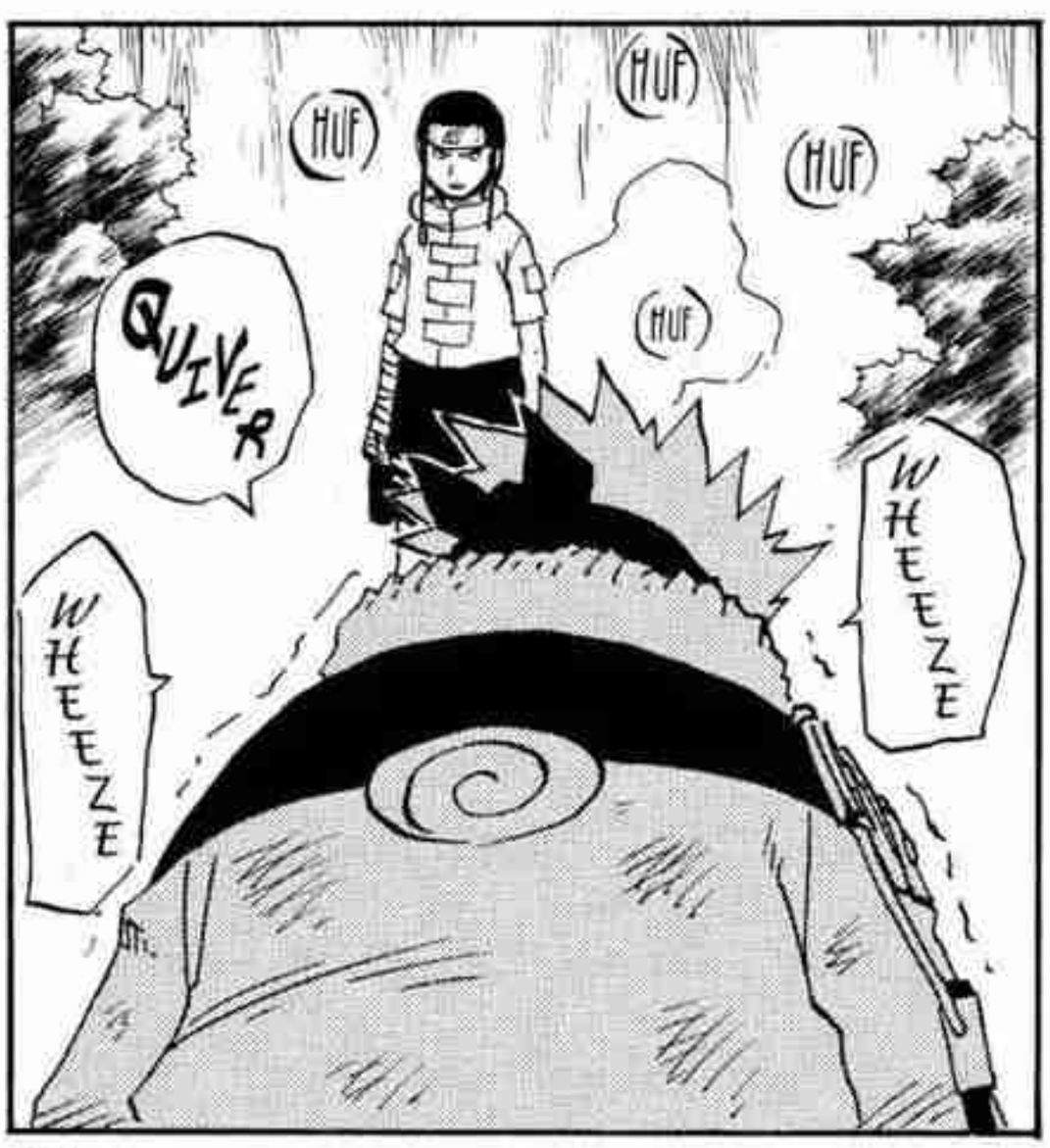
...DARN IT...!

...!

OH!

!

HUH?


HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
QUIVER
WHEEZE
WHEEZE

!
WHAT...?!

HUF

...I'M A SORE LOSER...!

HUF

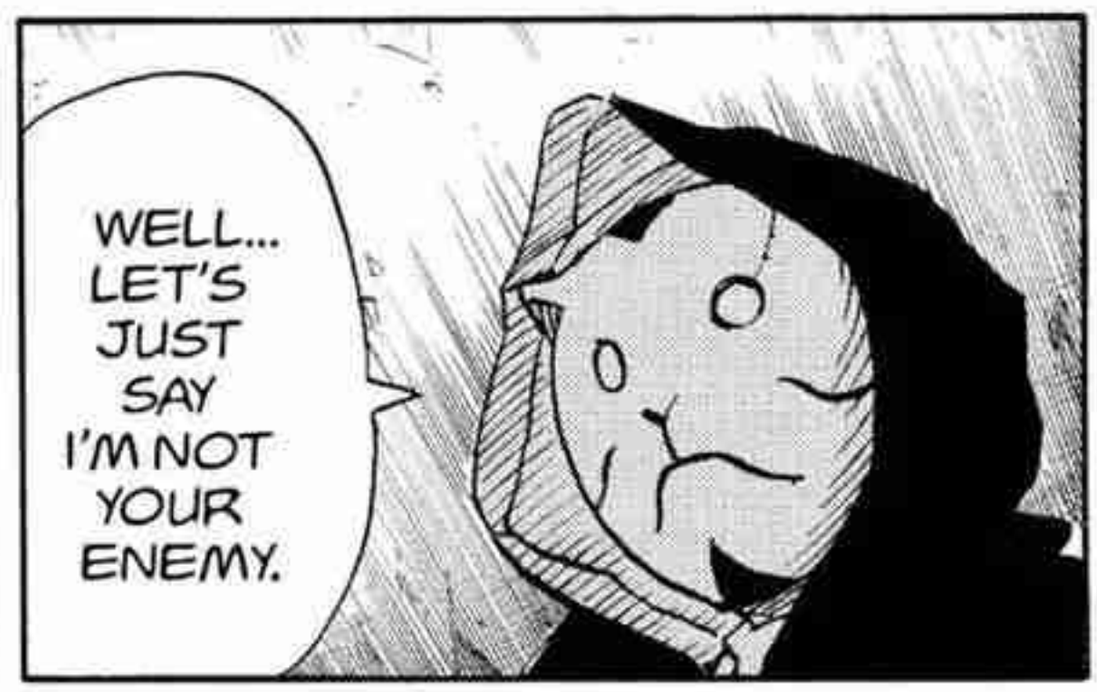
HUF

I TOLD YOU...

KOF

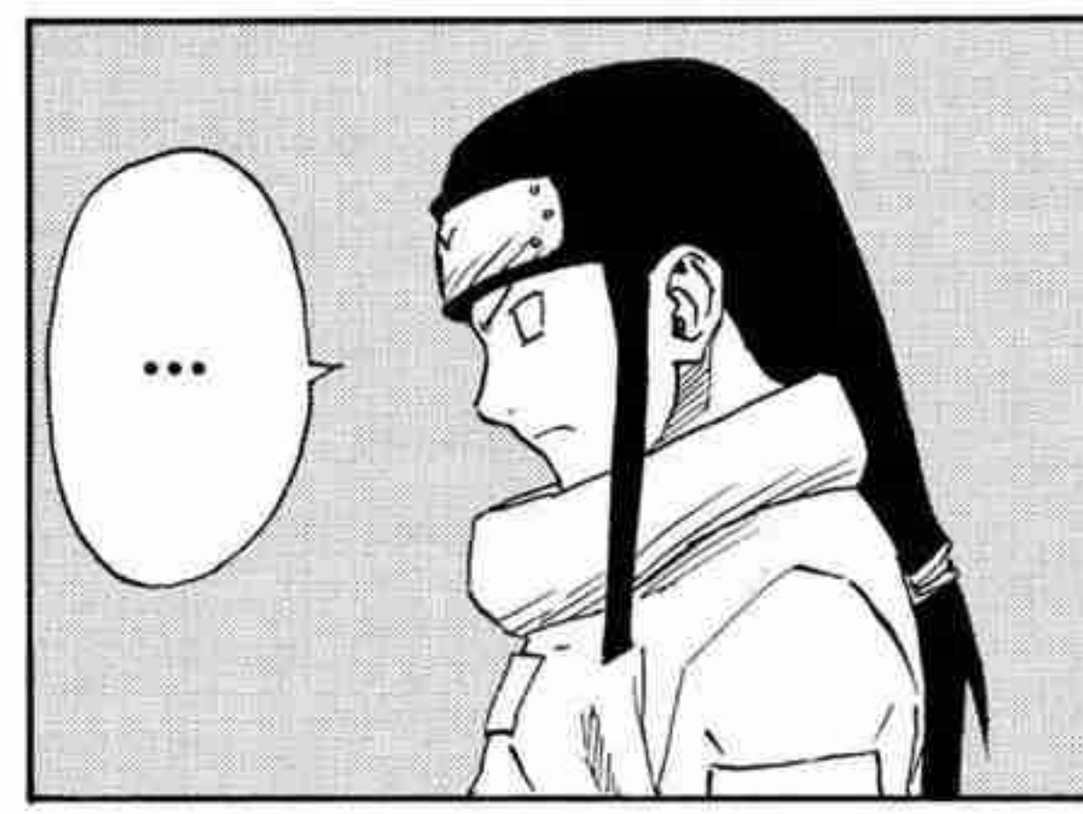
HUF
HUF
HUF

WHO ARE YOU?
!

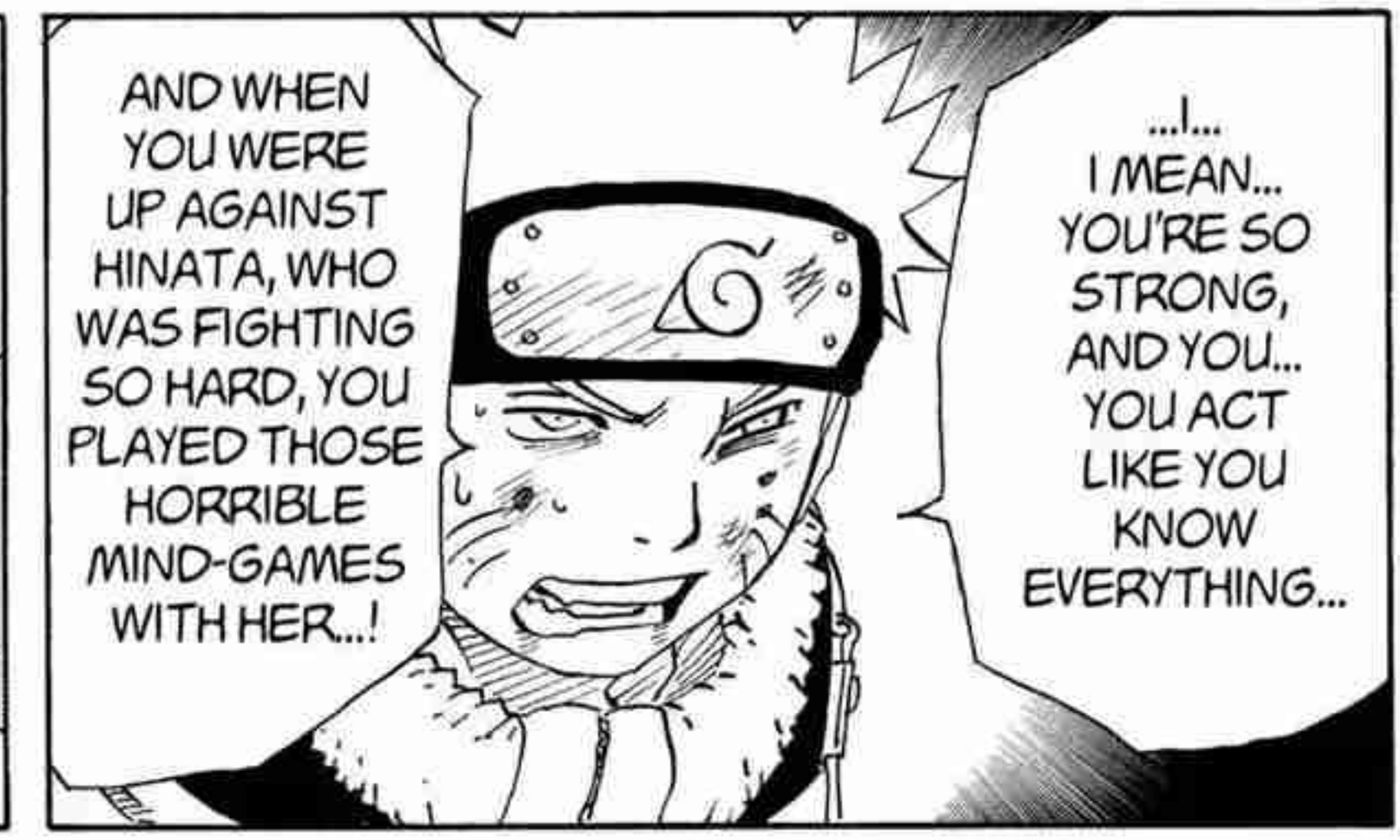

WELL... LET'S JUST SAY I'M NOT YOUR ENEMY.

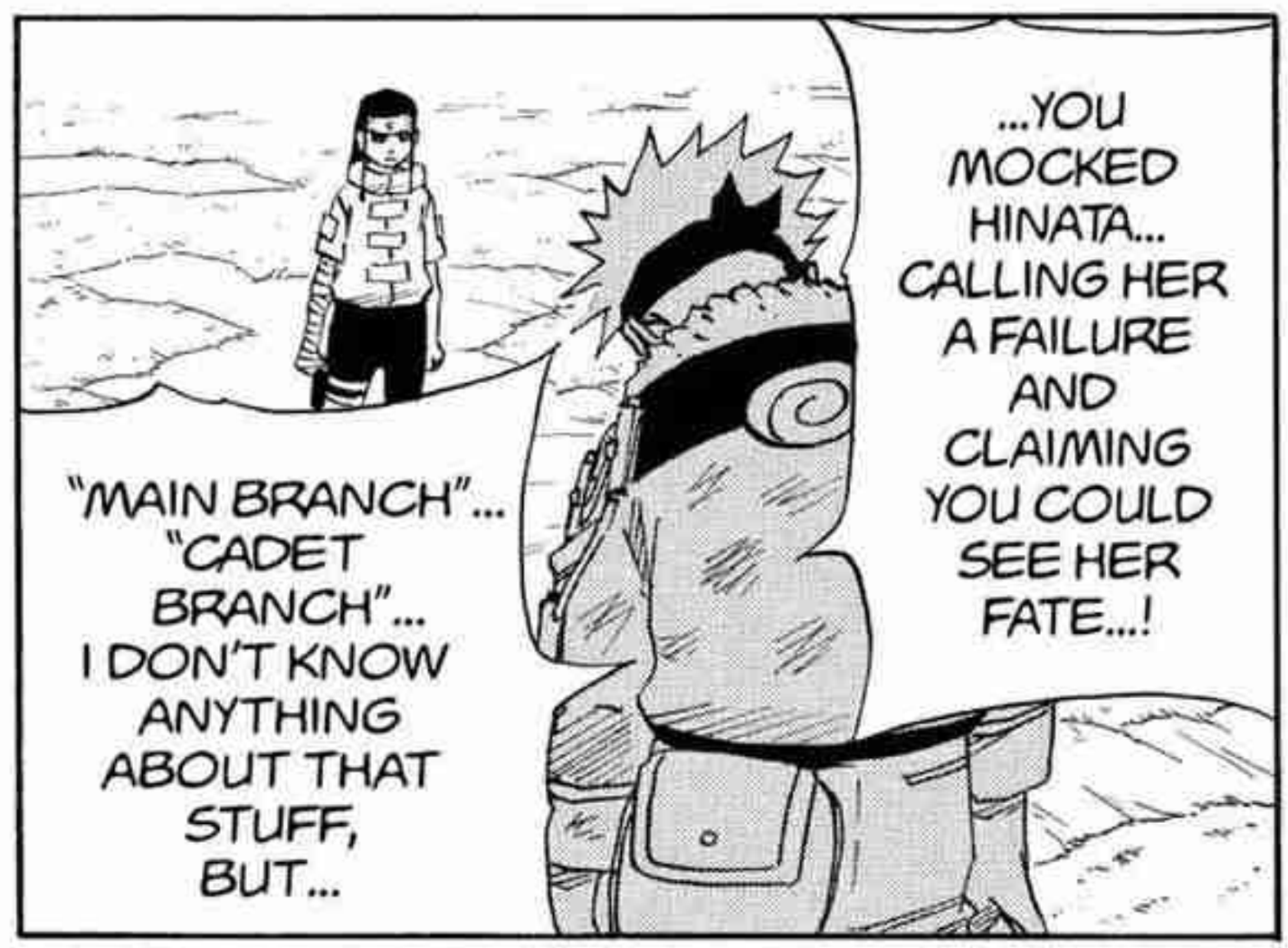
SH-SHUT UP! I... I DO, ALL RIGHT?!
AND I DON'T REALLY HAVE ANY GRUDGE AGAINST YOU, SO...
LISTEN, JUST GIVE UP, ALL RIGHT...? IF YOU KEEP GOING, IT'LL ONLY BE MORE OF THE SAME.

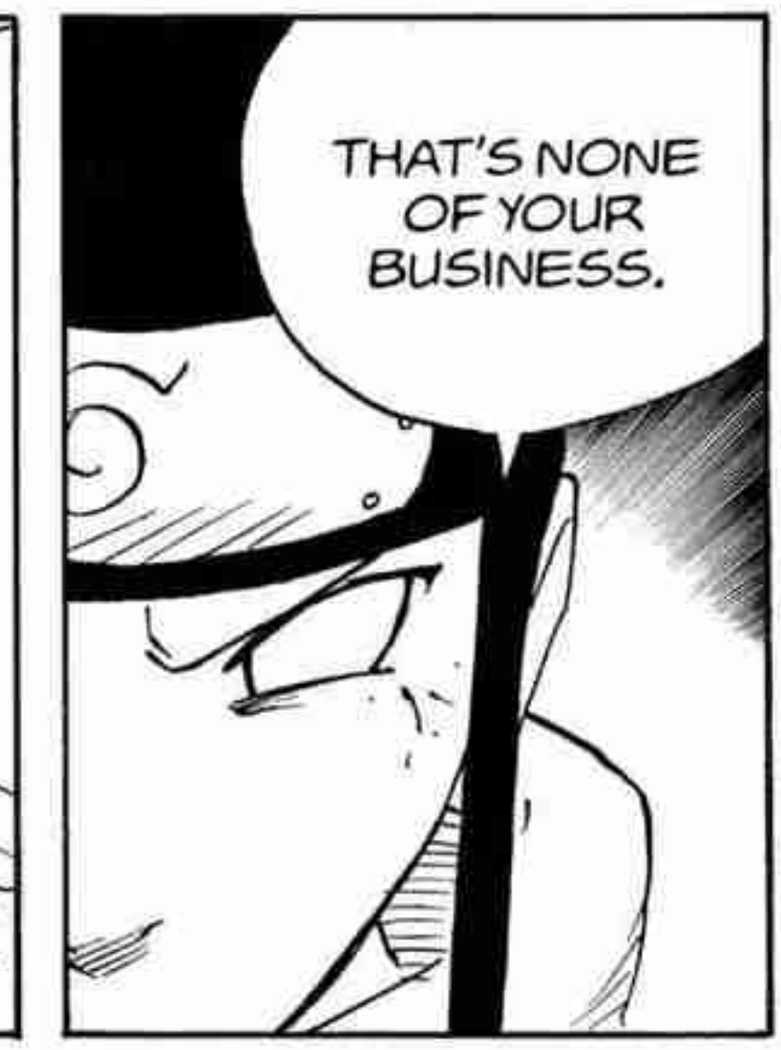
... WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?


...

BLINK

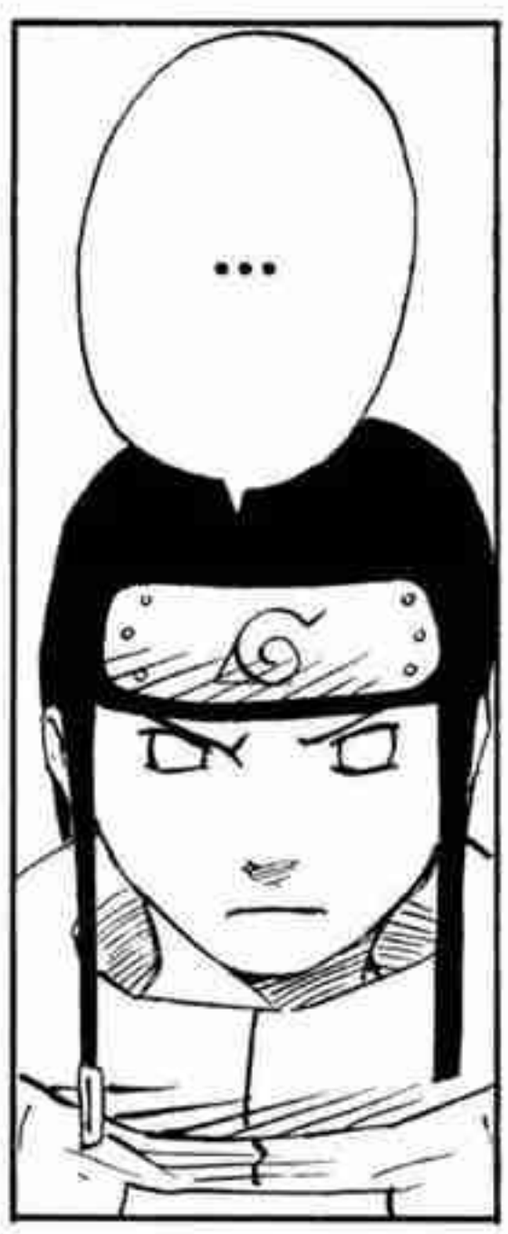

AND WHEN YOU WERE UP AGAINST HINATA, WHO WAS FIGHTING SO HARD, YOU PLAYED THOSE HORRIBLE MIND-GAMES WITH HER...!
...I... I MEAN... YOU'RE SO STRONG, AND YOU... YOU ACT LIKE YOU KNOW EVERYTHING...


"MAIN BRANCH"... "CADET BRANCH"... I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THAT STUFF, BUT...
...YOU MOCKED HINATA... CALLING HER A FAILURE AND CLAIMING YOU COULD SEE HER FATE...!


THAT'S NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS.

...A JERK WHO GOES AROUND CALLING PEOPLE FAILURES!!
...I COULD NEVER FORGIVE...

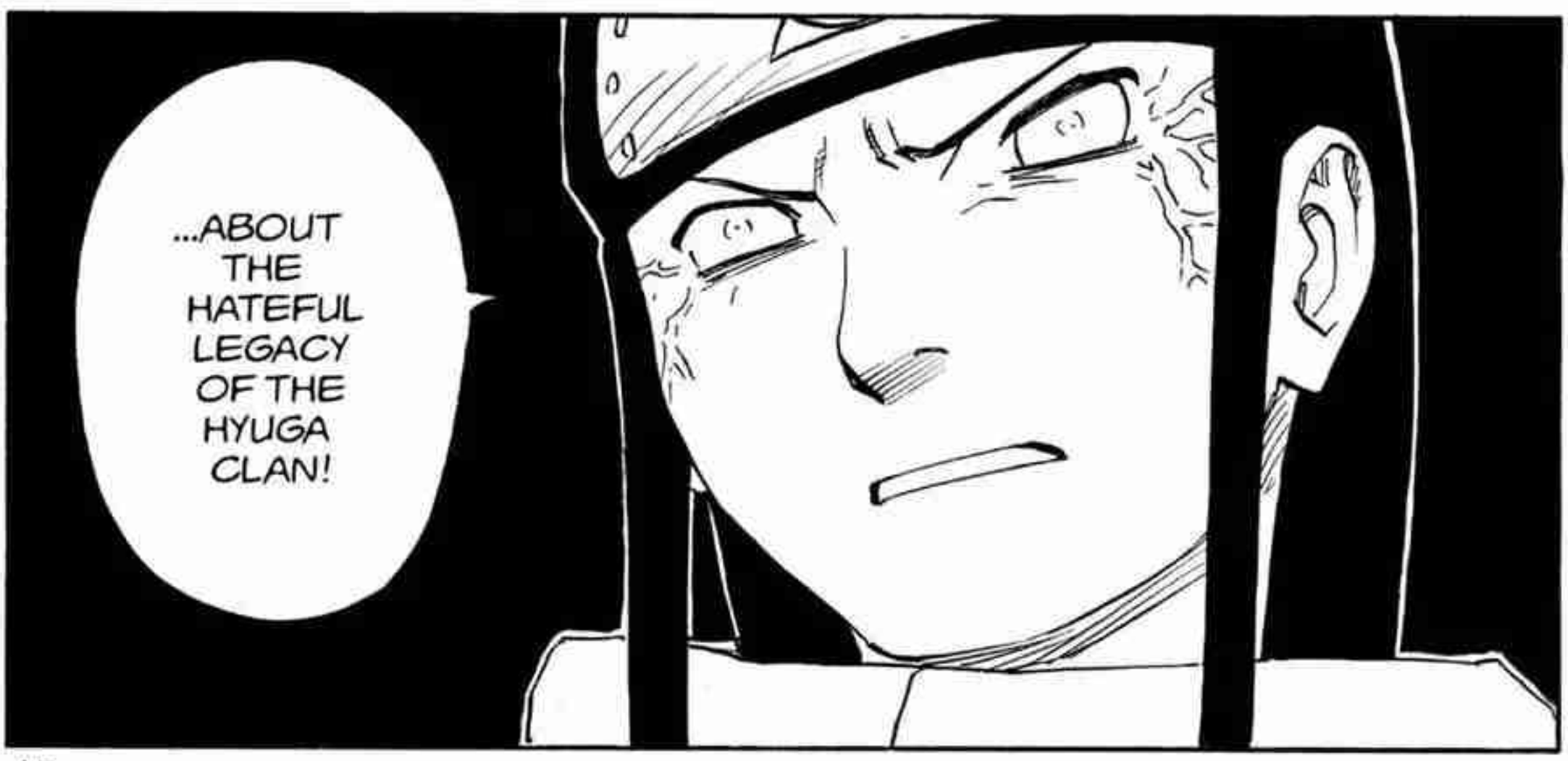
READ
THIS
WAY


...

...

!

ALL RIGHT... SINCE YOU INSIST, I'LL TELL YOU...
...FINE.


...ABOUT THE HATEFUL LEGACY OF THE HYUGA CLAN!

HAPPY SECOND ANNIVERSARY!!

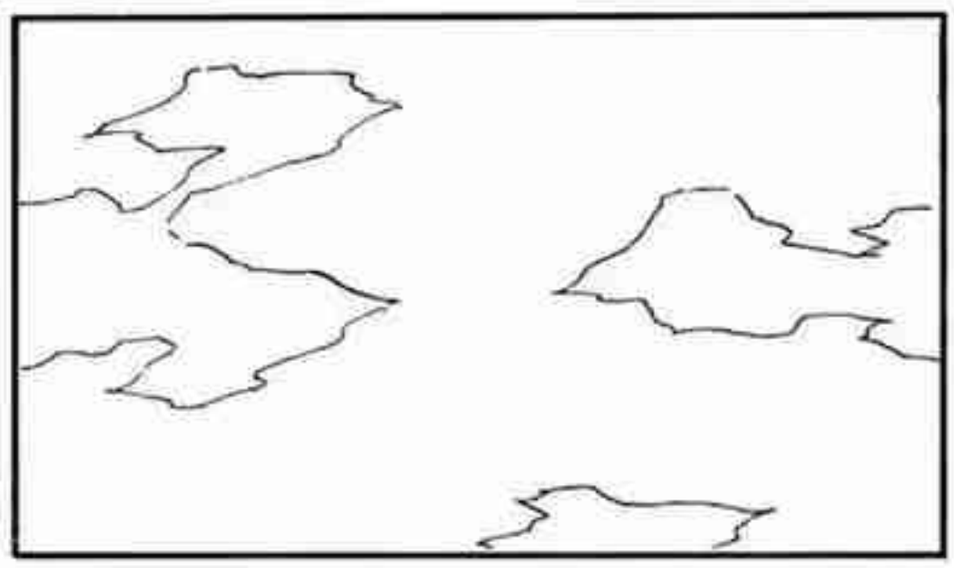
☆ いつまでもやる気まんまんのナルトのような元気でいてください

高橋一生

PLEASE STAY FULL OF ENERGY, JUST LIKE NARUTO, FOREVER!
TAKAHASHI KAZUHIRO

Number 102: The Caged Bird...!!

...



RELAX, I'M A DOCTOR...
HEY...!

HUF
HUF
THERE'S A SECRET BIRTHRIGHT NINJUTSU PASSED DOWN...
...IN THE HYUGA MAIN BRANCH.

A CURSE MARK JUTSU...?
HUF

IT'S...
...A CURSE MARK JUTSU.

AND... IT IS PROOF THAT SOME PEOPLE ARE BOUND TO DESTINIES FROM WHICH THEY CANNOT ESCAPE!
THIS CURSE MARK REPRESENTS A "CAGED BIRD"...

!

TUG

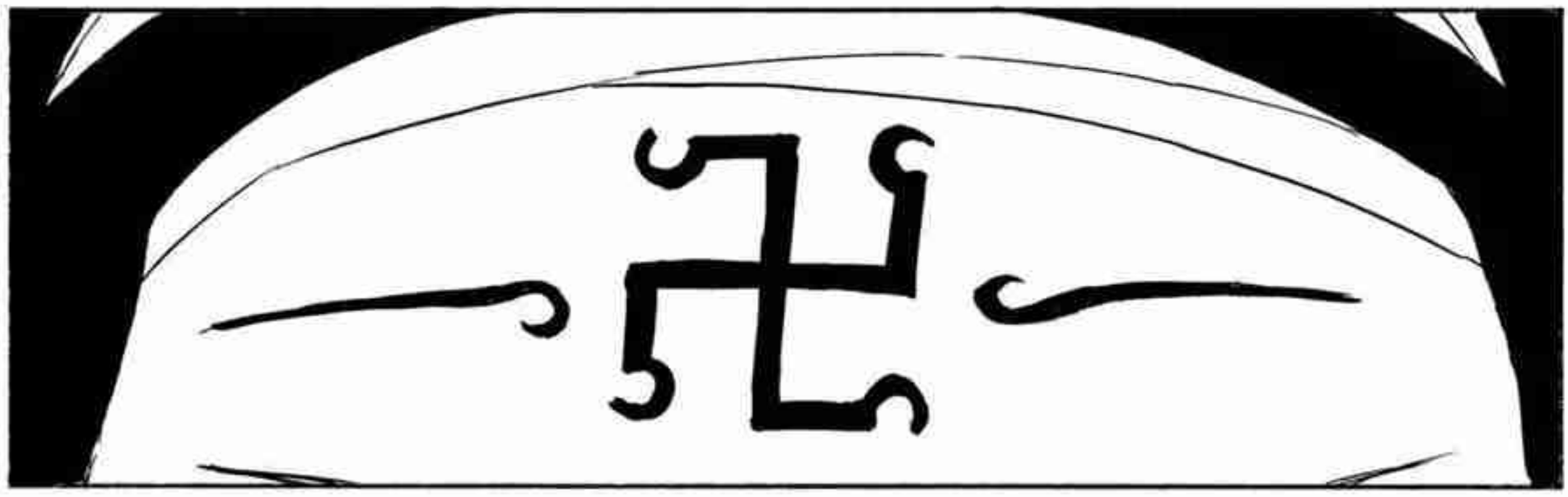
?!

WH-WHAT THE ...?!

SWUP

Number 102:

The Caged Bird...!!



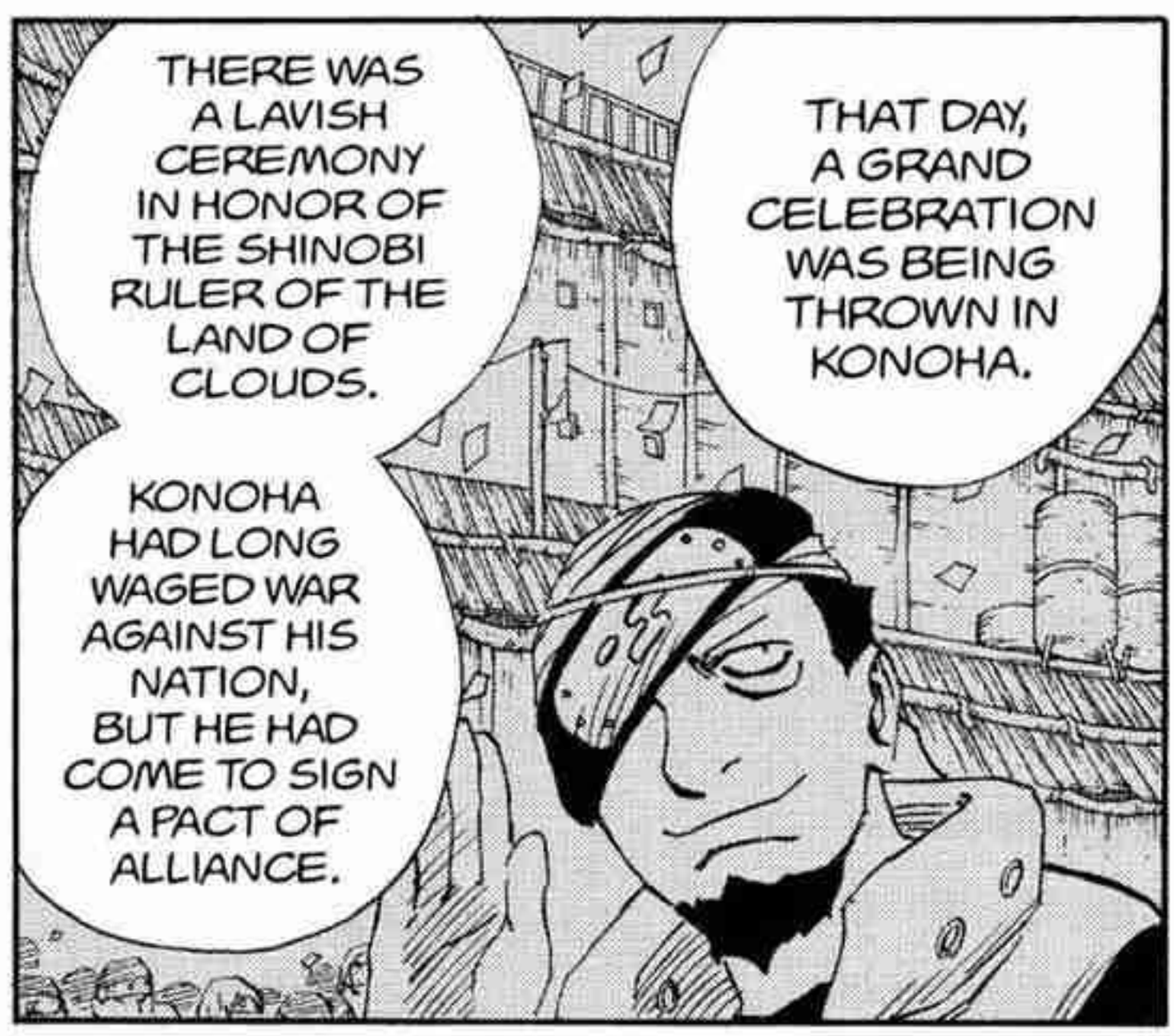
THE SYMBOL PICTURED ABOVE, CALLED A MANJI, IS TRADITIONAL IN BUDDHIST IMAGERY. --ED.

...TH-THAT'S THE MARK...?!

...

...

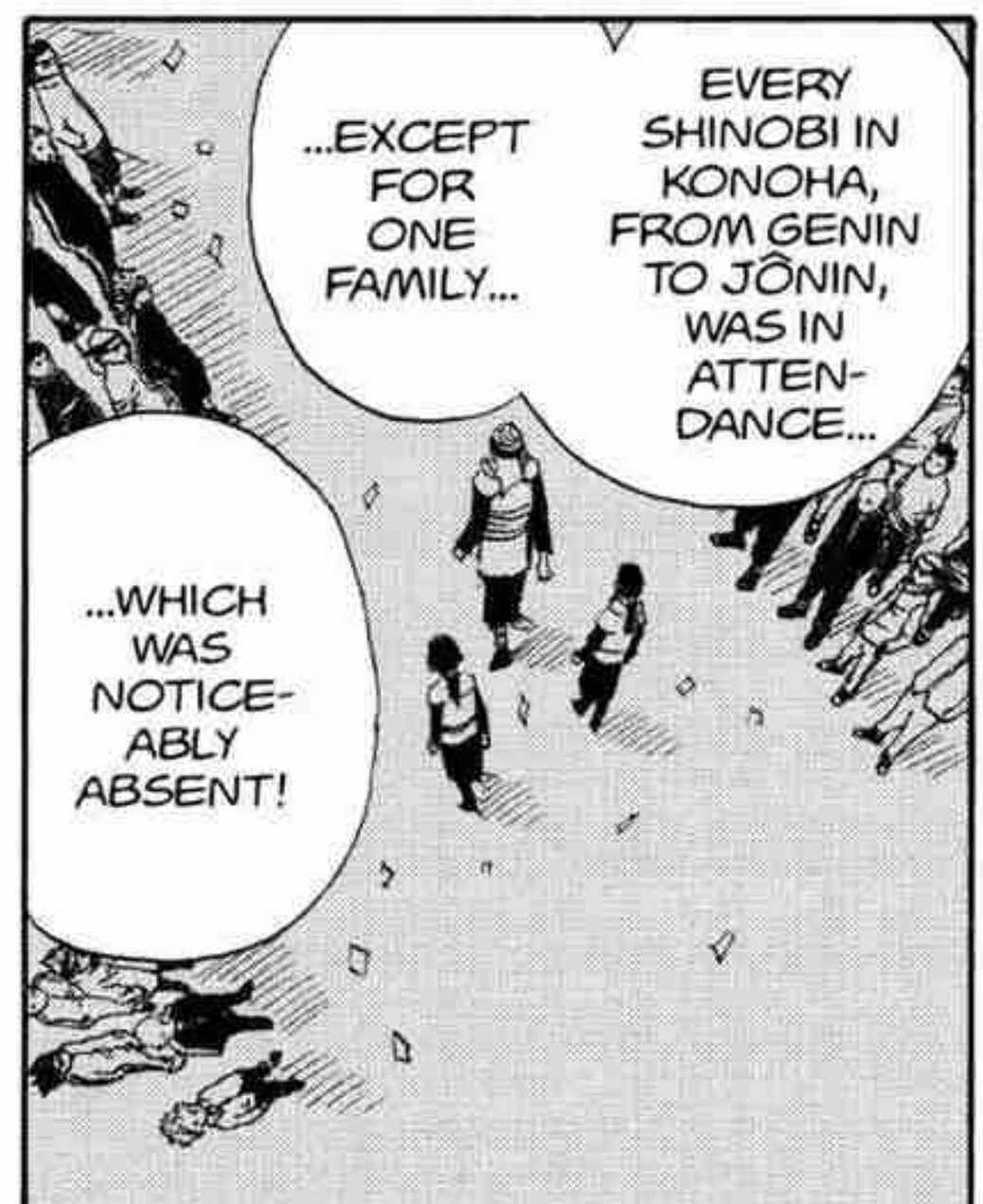
...


THERE WAS A LAVISH CEREMONY IN HONOR OF THE SHINOBI RULER OF THE LAND OF CLOUDS.
THAT DAY, A GRAND CELEBRATION WAS BEING THROWN IN KONOHA.
KONOHA HAD LONG WAGED WAR AGAINST HIS NATION, BUT HE HAD COME TO SIGN A PACT OF ALLIANCE.

THIS ABOMINABLE MARK WAS BRANDED ONTO MY FOREHEAD USING THE CURSE MARK JUTSU...
...ONE DAY... WHEN I WAS FOUR YEARS OLD...

...
THE DAY THAT THE MAIN BRANCH'S HEIR TURNED THREE.
COINCIDENTALLY, THAT DAY WAS ALSO...
IT WAS THE HYUGA CLAN!

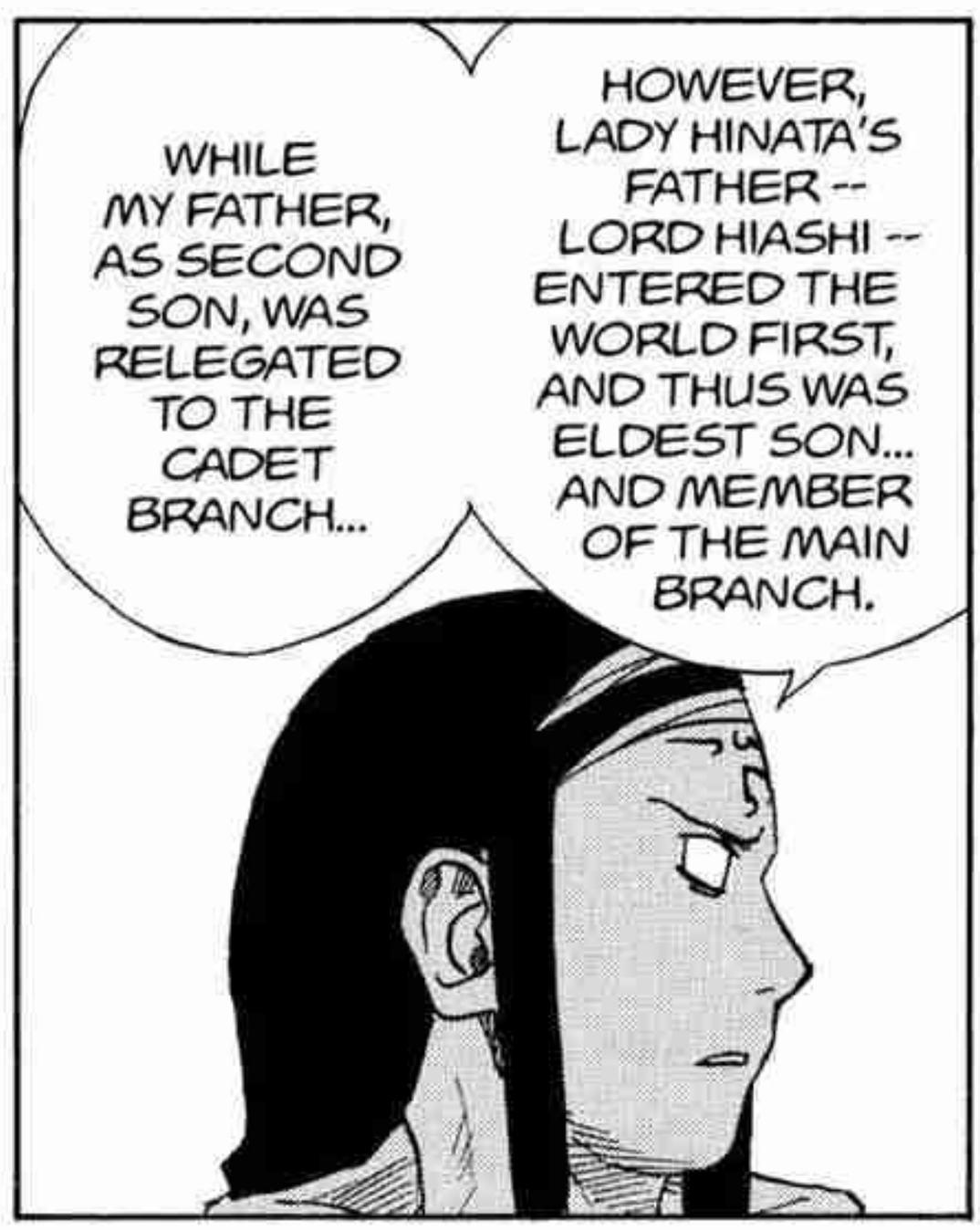
?!


...EXCEPT FOR ONE FAMILY...
EVERY SHINOBI IN KONOHA, FROM GENIN TO JÔNIN, WAS IN ATTENDANCE...
...WHICH WAS NOTICEABLY ABSENT!

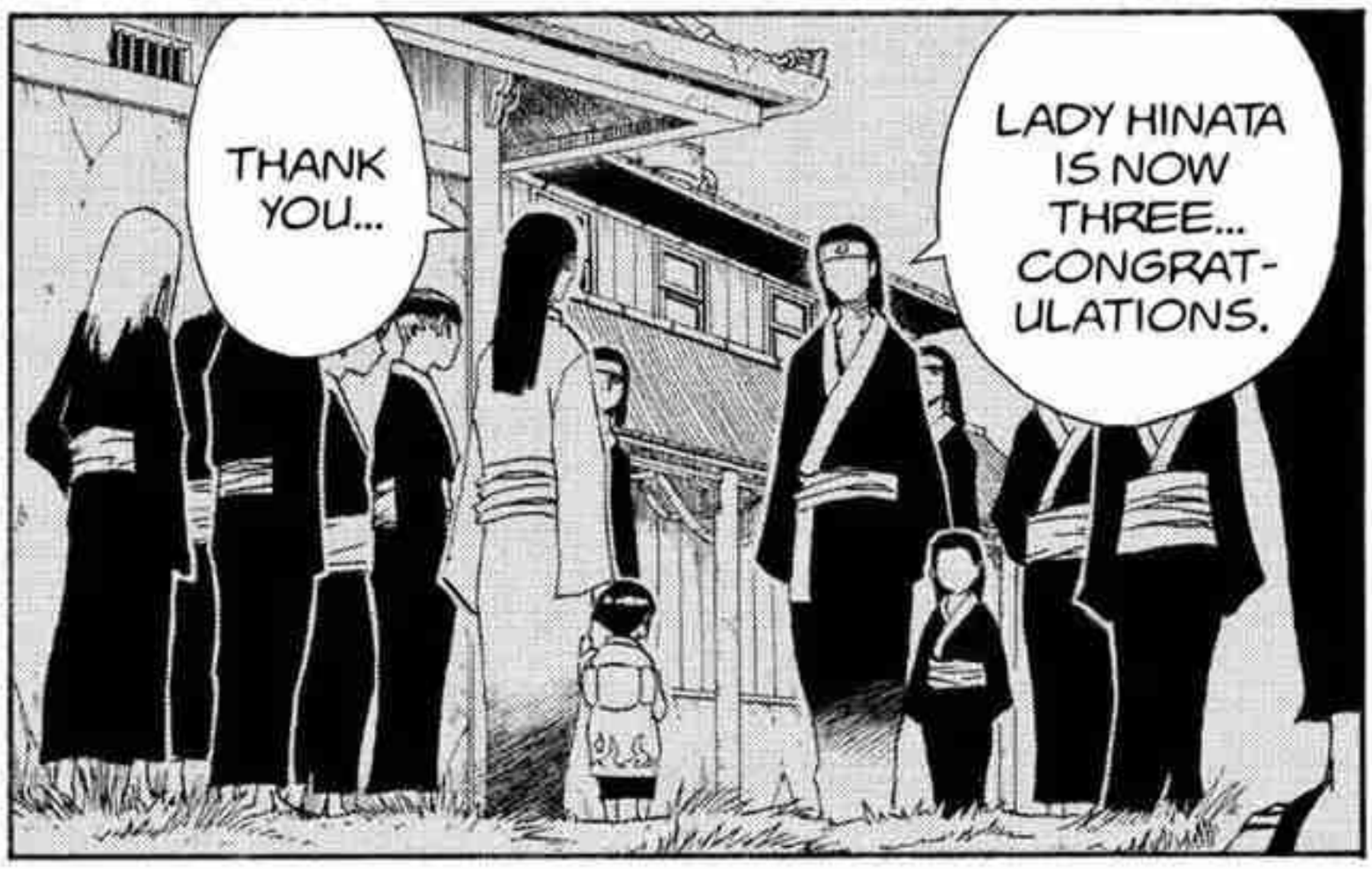
IT WAS LADY HINATA'S THIRD BIRTHDAY!

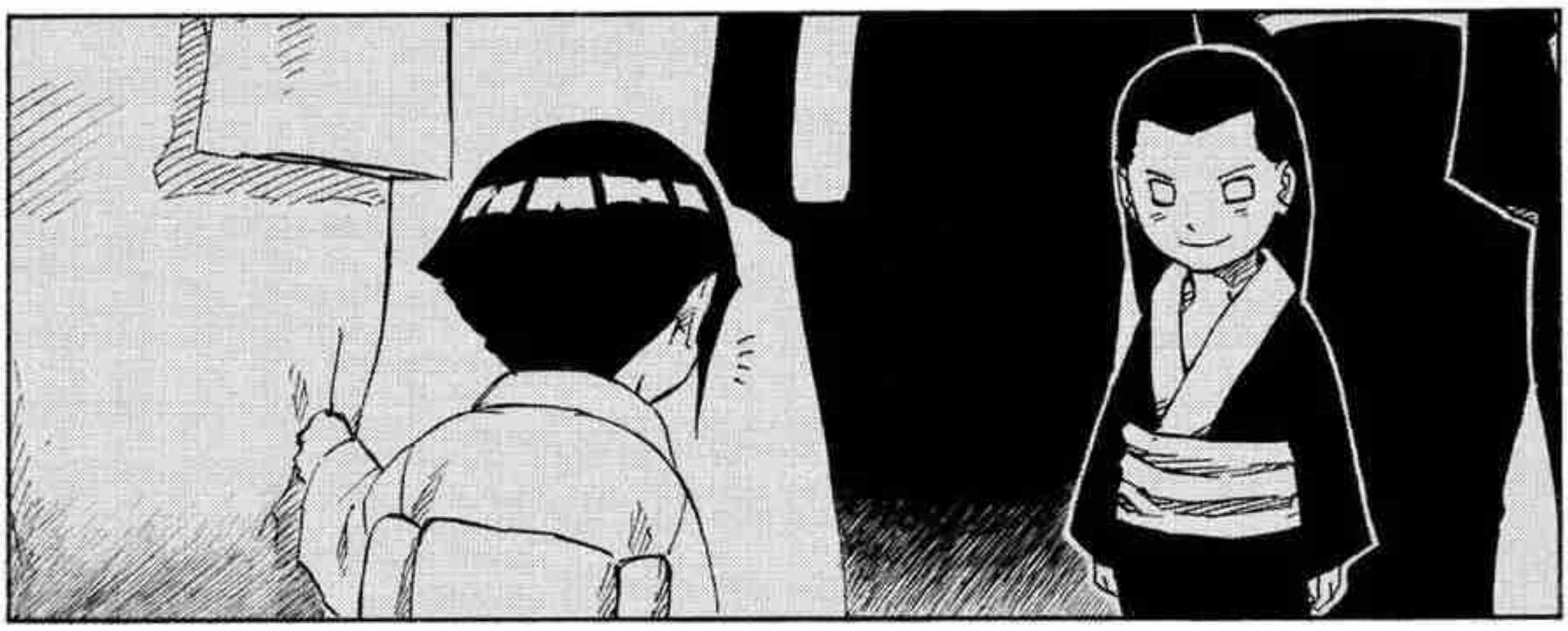
...

!!


WHILE MY FATHER, AS SECOND SON, WAS RELEGATED TO THE CADET BRANCH...
HOWEVER, LADY HINATA'S FATHER -- LORD HIASHI -- ENTERED THE WORLD FIRST, AND THUS WAS ELDEST SON... AND MEMBER OF THE MAIN BRANCH.

MY FATHER AND LADY HINATA'S FATHER OVER THERE...
...HYUGA HIZASHI AND LORD HYUGA HIASHI... WERE TWIN BROTHERS.

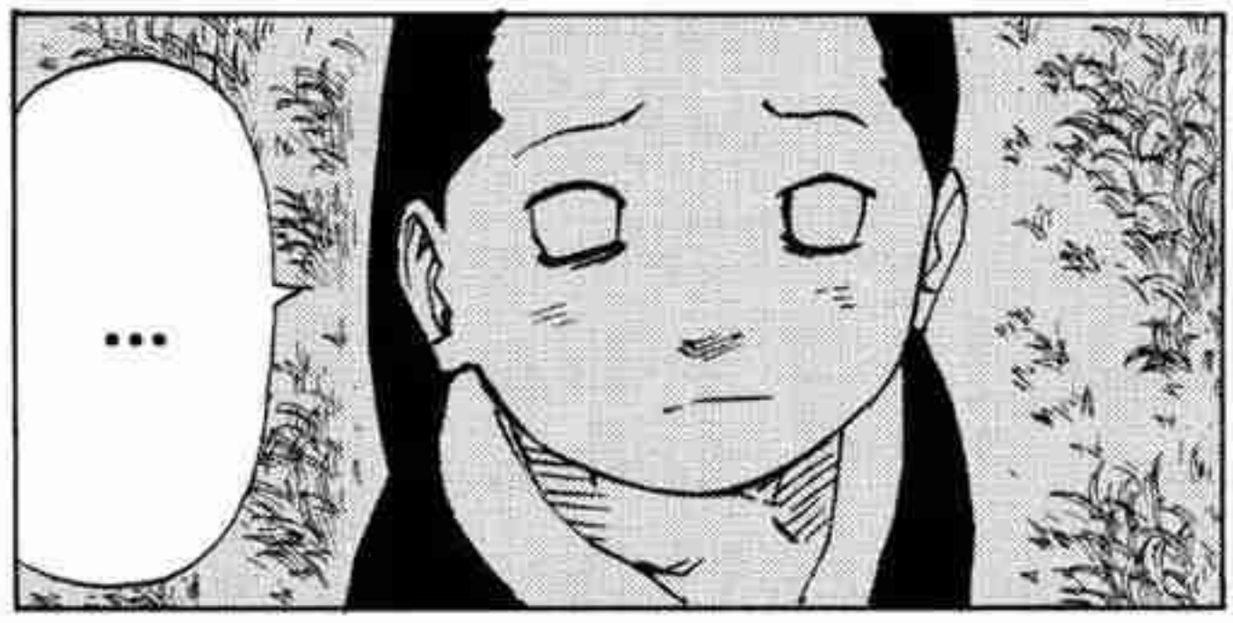

THANK YOU...
LADY HINATA IS NOW THREE... CONGRAT-ULATIONS.

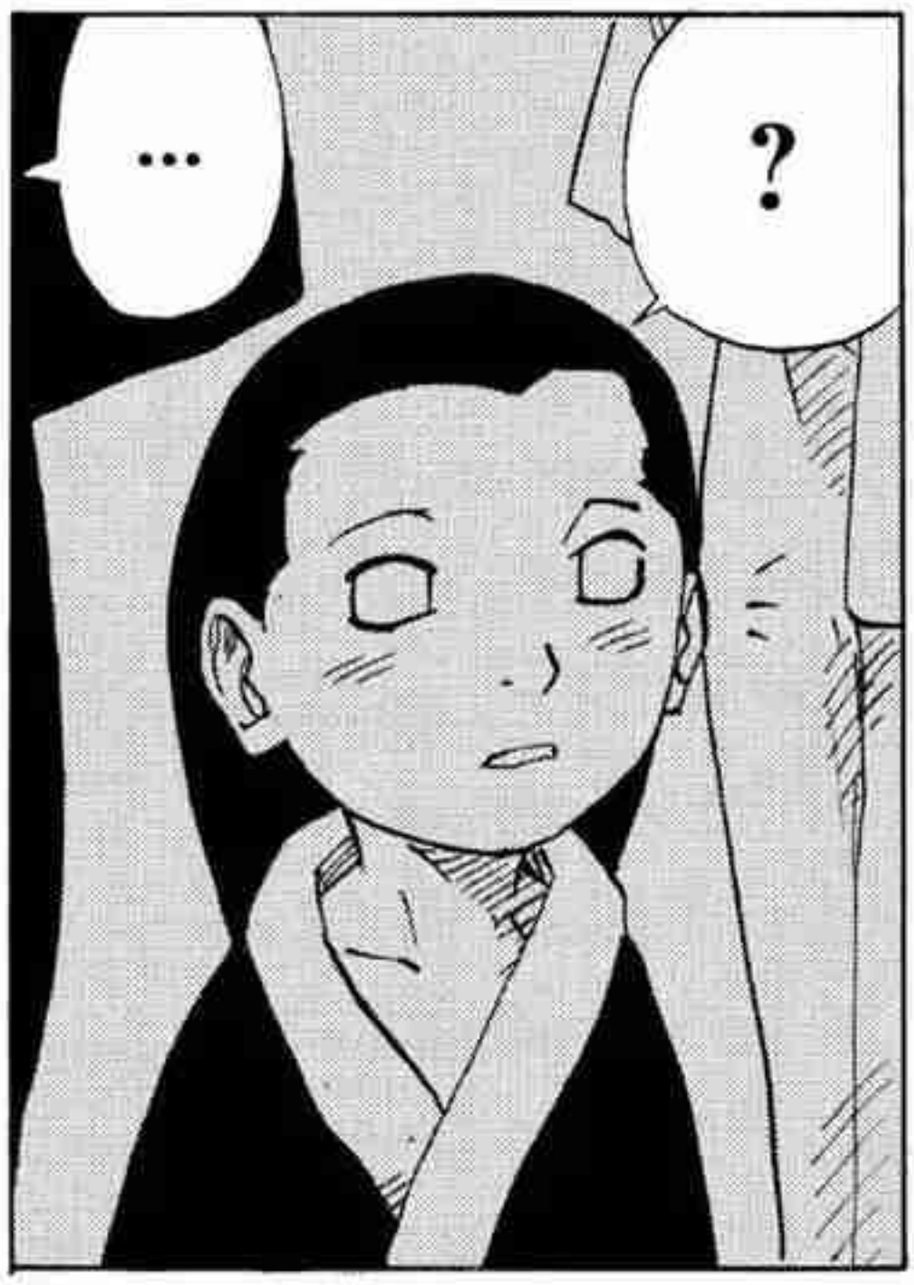


HUH...?!
...WHAT'S THE MATTER, FATHER?
...OH, NO... IT'S NOTHING...

SHE'S A CUTE KID, FATHER...!

...


...


...
?

WELL THEN... I'LL BE TAKING CHARGE OF NEJI. HIZASHI...

...YES, SIR.

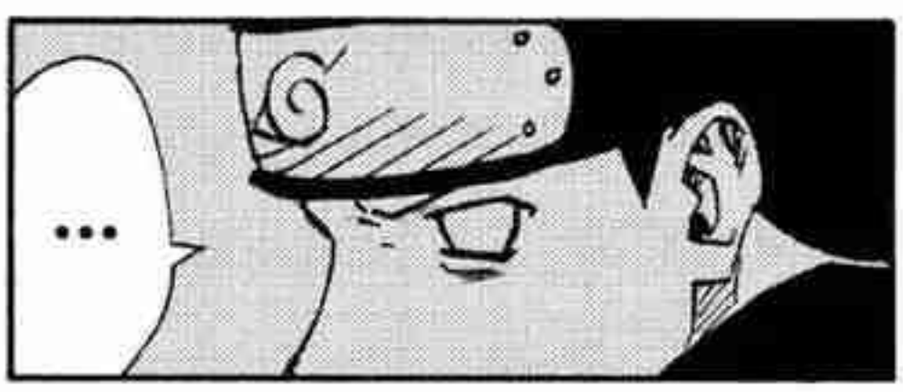
...A MEMBER OF HYUGA'S CADET BRANCH!

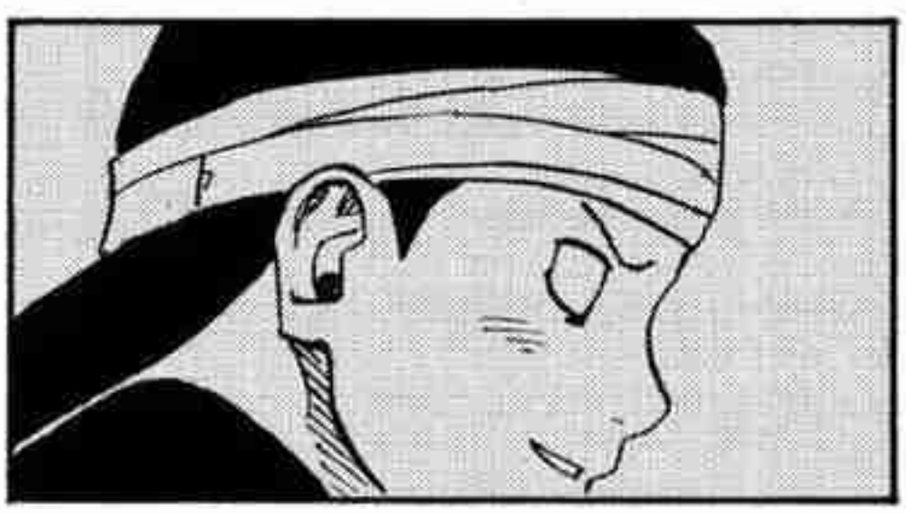
WHEN THE HEIR OF THE MAIN BRANCH TURNED THREE YEARS OLD...
...I WAS BRANDED WITH THE CURSE MARK AND BECAME A "CAGED BIRD"...

THIS MARK ON MY FOREHEAD IS NO DECORATION...

SPLITTING INTO MAIN BRANCH AND CADET BRANCH...
...WHAT IS IT FOR? AND WHAT DOES THAT WEIRD MARK MEAN?
...WHY DID THEY HAVE TO DO THAT...?

WHAP


...

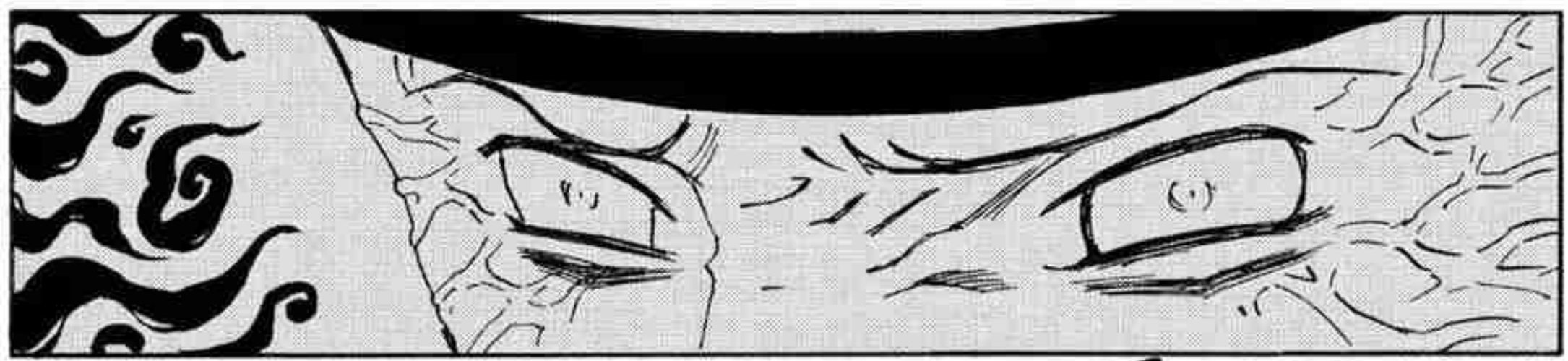


...

LISTEN CLOSELY, NEJI. YOUR PURPOSE IN LIFE...
...IS TO PROTECT LADY HINATA... THE BLOOD OF THE HYUGA CLAN.
YES, FATHER!

...I SEE... BLOOD-LUST!!

FASTER! MOVE YOUR FEET!
HUF
HUF
HUF



HMPH!

THROB

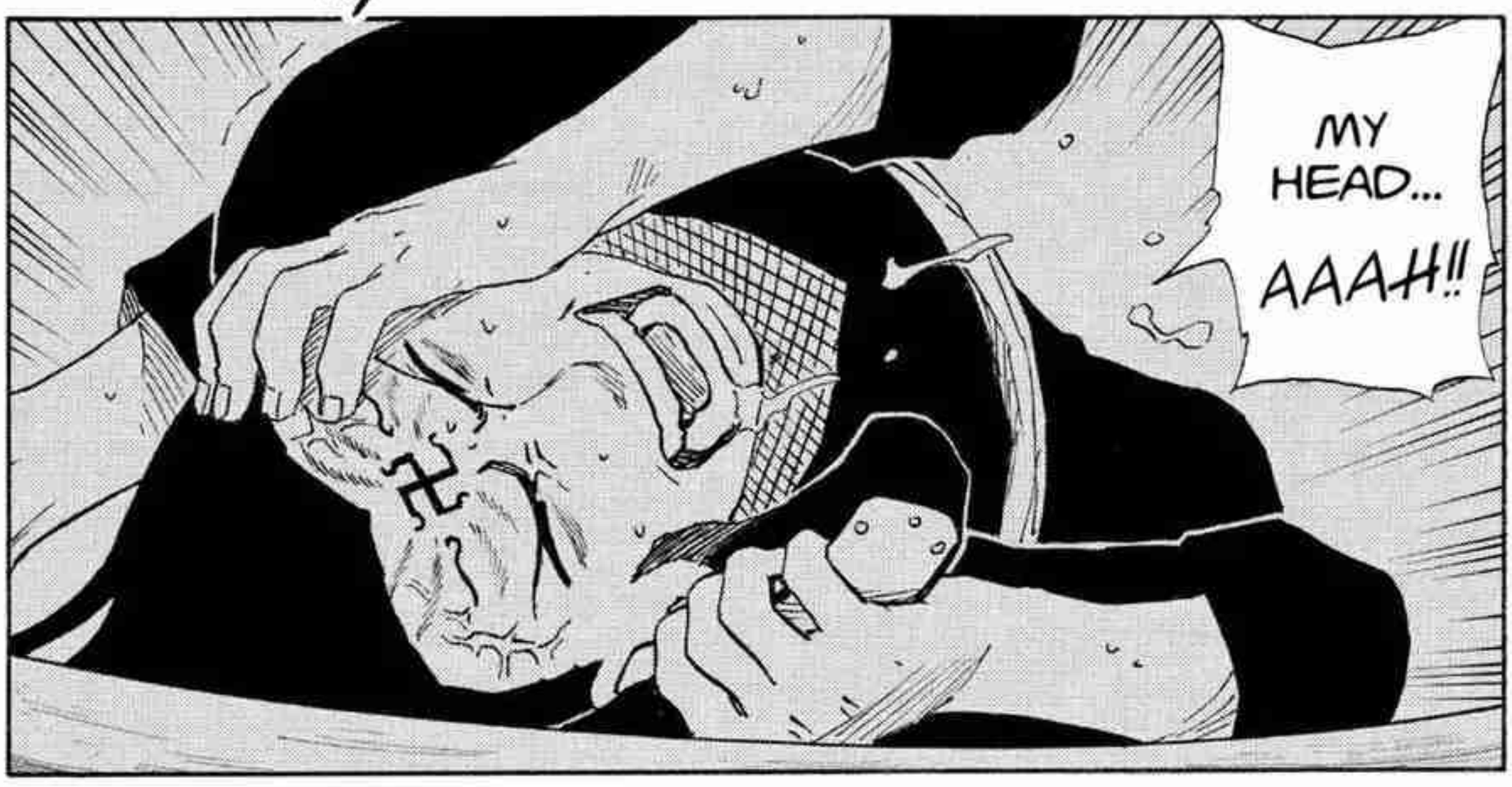
DASH
!

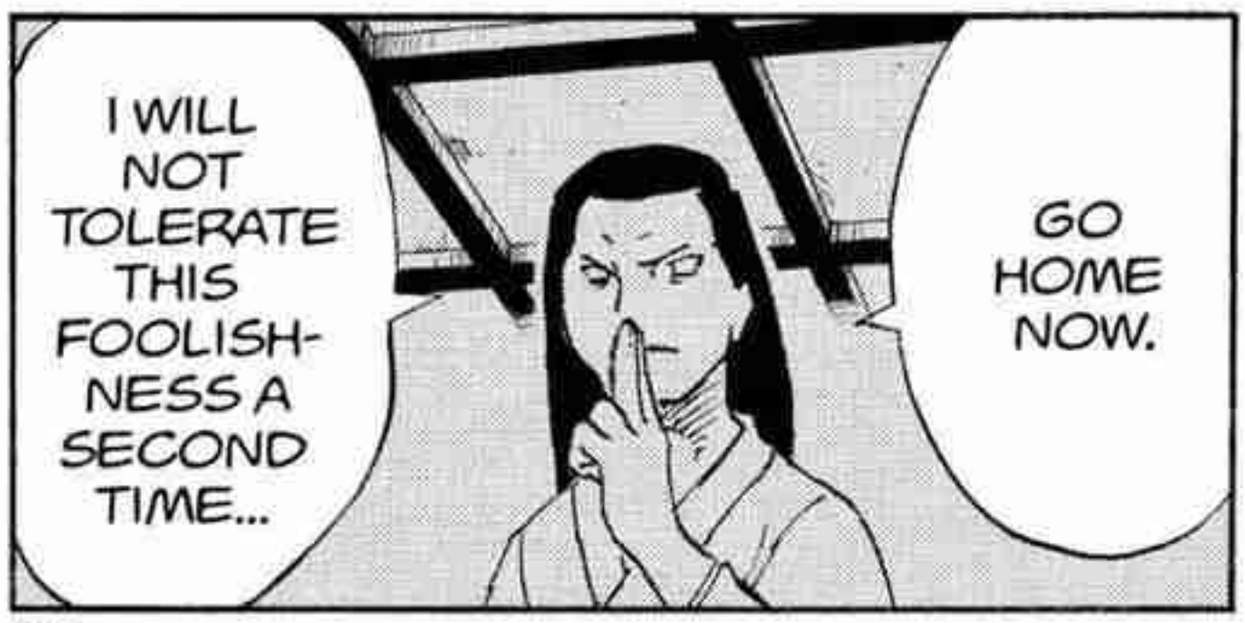
FATHER! WHAT'S WRONG?!

AAARGH!
!!

GAAH!!

FWUMP


MY HEAD...
AAAH!!


I WILL NOT TOLERATE THIS FOOLISH-NESS A SECOND TIME...
GO HOME NOW.

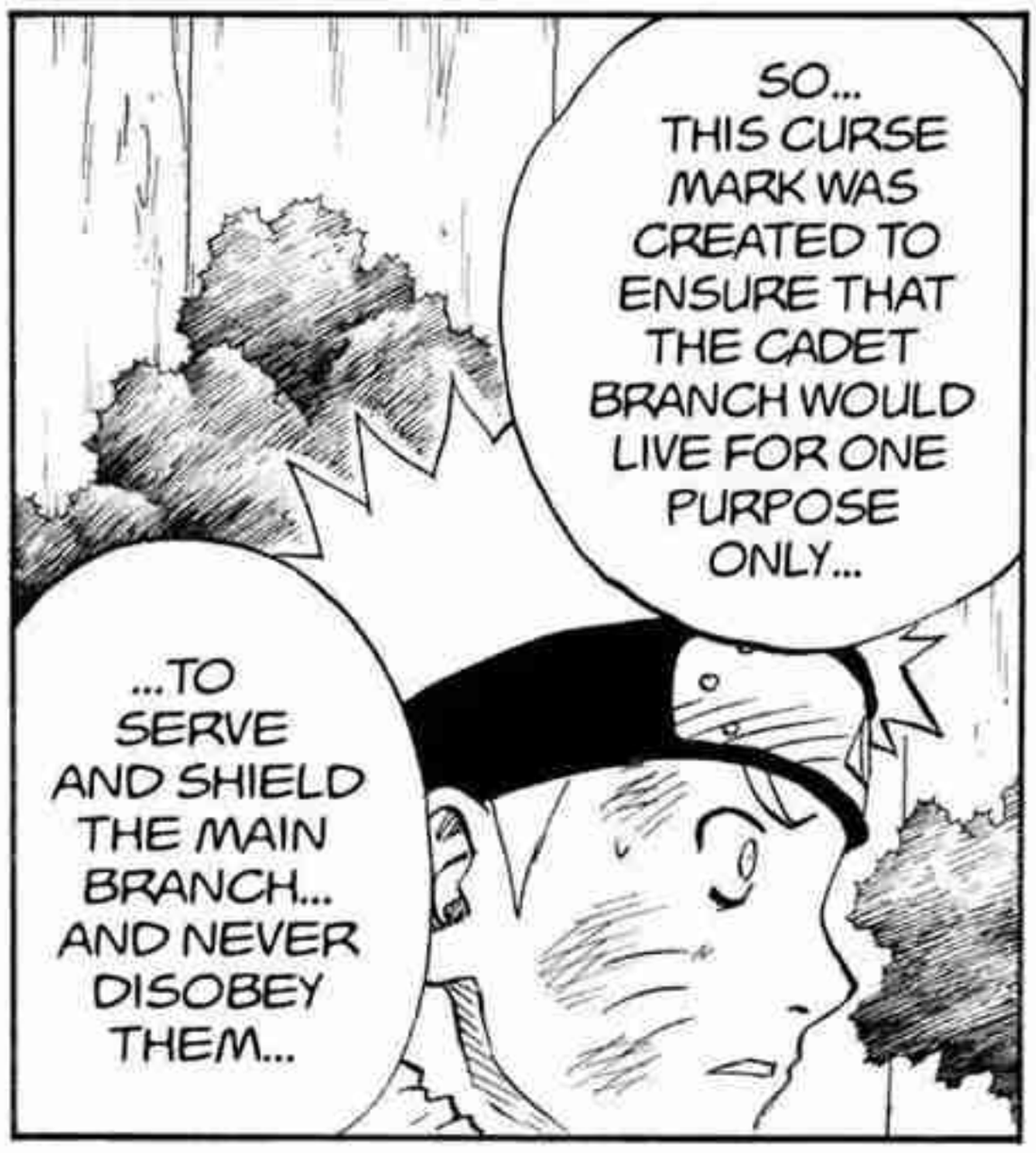
UGH... UNH...
FATHER!!

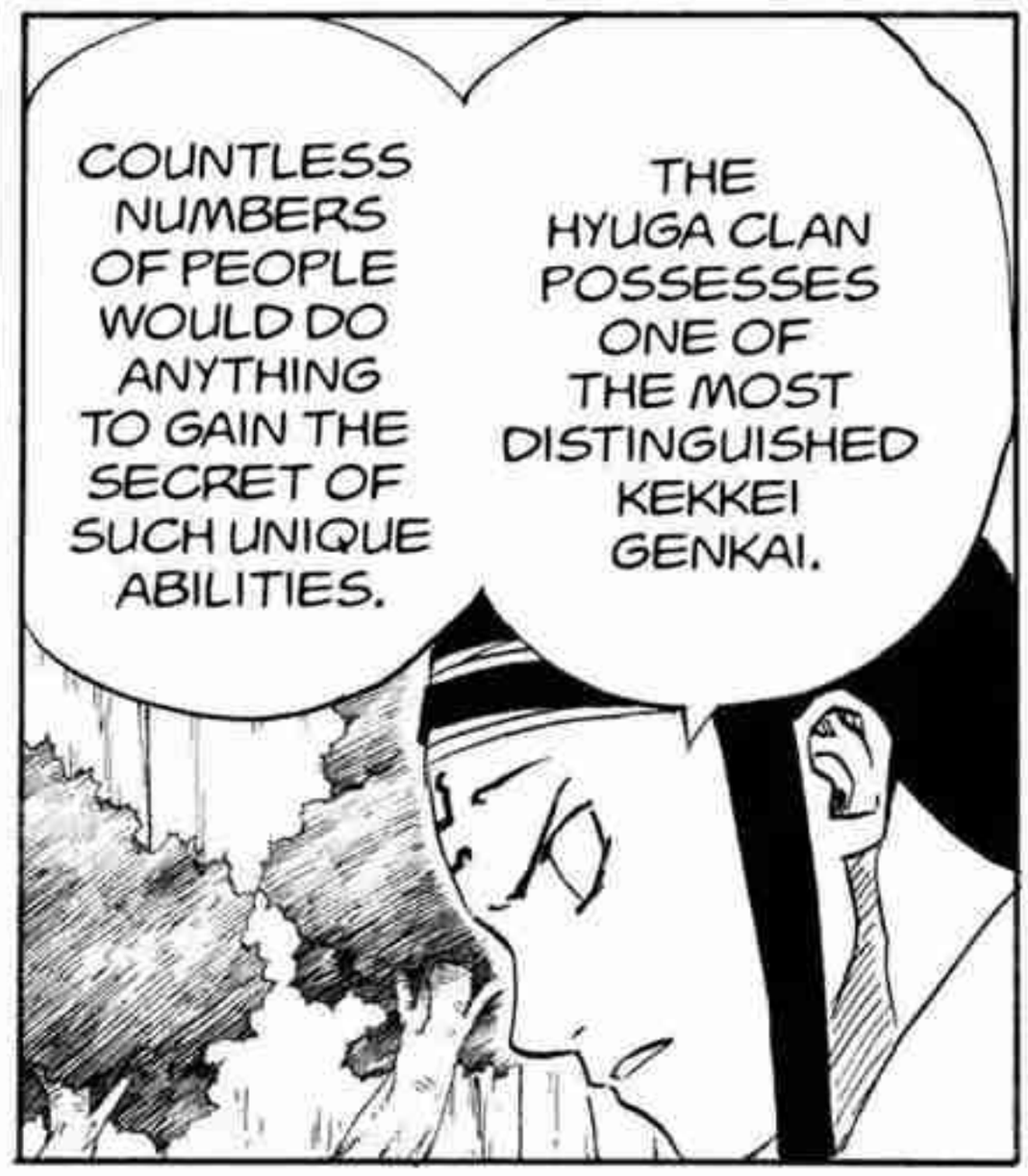
NEVER FORGET YOUR PLACE AGAIN...!!

THE SECRET TECHNIQUES OF THE MAIN BRANCH CAN EASILY DESTROY THE MINDS OF THOSE OF THE CADET BRANCH...
SO, OF COURSE, KILLING US IS A SIMPLE TASK.
THIS CURSE MARK SIGNIFIES AN ABSOLUTE THREAT OF DEATH IMPOSED BY THE MAIN BRANCH UPON THE CADET BRANCH...!

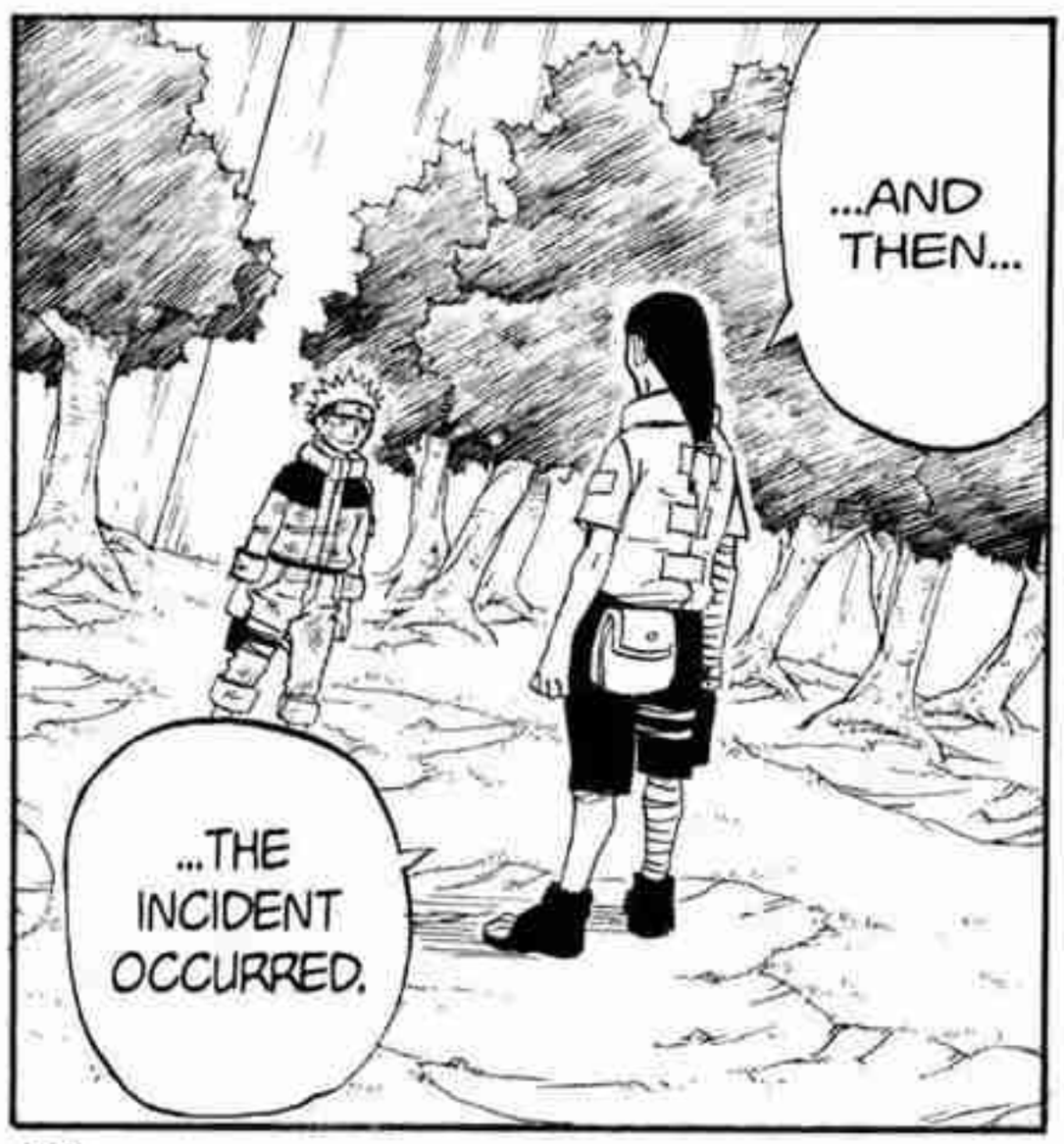
!!!

...AFTER THE SECRET OF THE BYAKUGAN HAS BEEN SEALED AWAY...!!
AND THIS CURSE MARK ONLY FADES AFTER DEATH...


SO... THIS CURSE MARK WAS CREATED TO ENSURE THAT THE CADET BRANCH WOULD LIVE FOR ONE PURPOSE ONLY...
...TO SERVE AND SHIELD THE MAIN BRANCH... AND NEVER DISOBEY THEM...


COUNTLESS NUMBERS OF PEOPLE WOULD DO ANYTHING TO GAIN THE SECRET OF SUCH UNIQUE ABILITIES.
THE HYUGA CLAN POSSESSES ONE OF THE MOST DISTINGUISHED KEKKEI GENKAI.

IT'S A BRILLIANT, EFFICIENT SET-UP.
...AND TO ETERNALLY PROTECT THE BYAKUGAN... THE BLOODLINE TRAIT OF THE HYUGA CLAN.

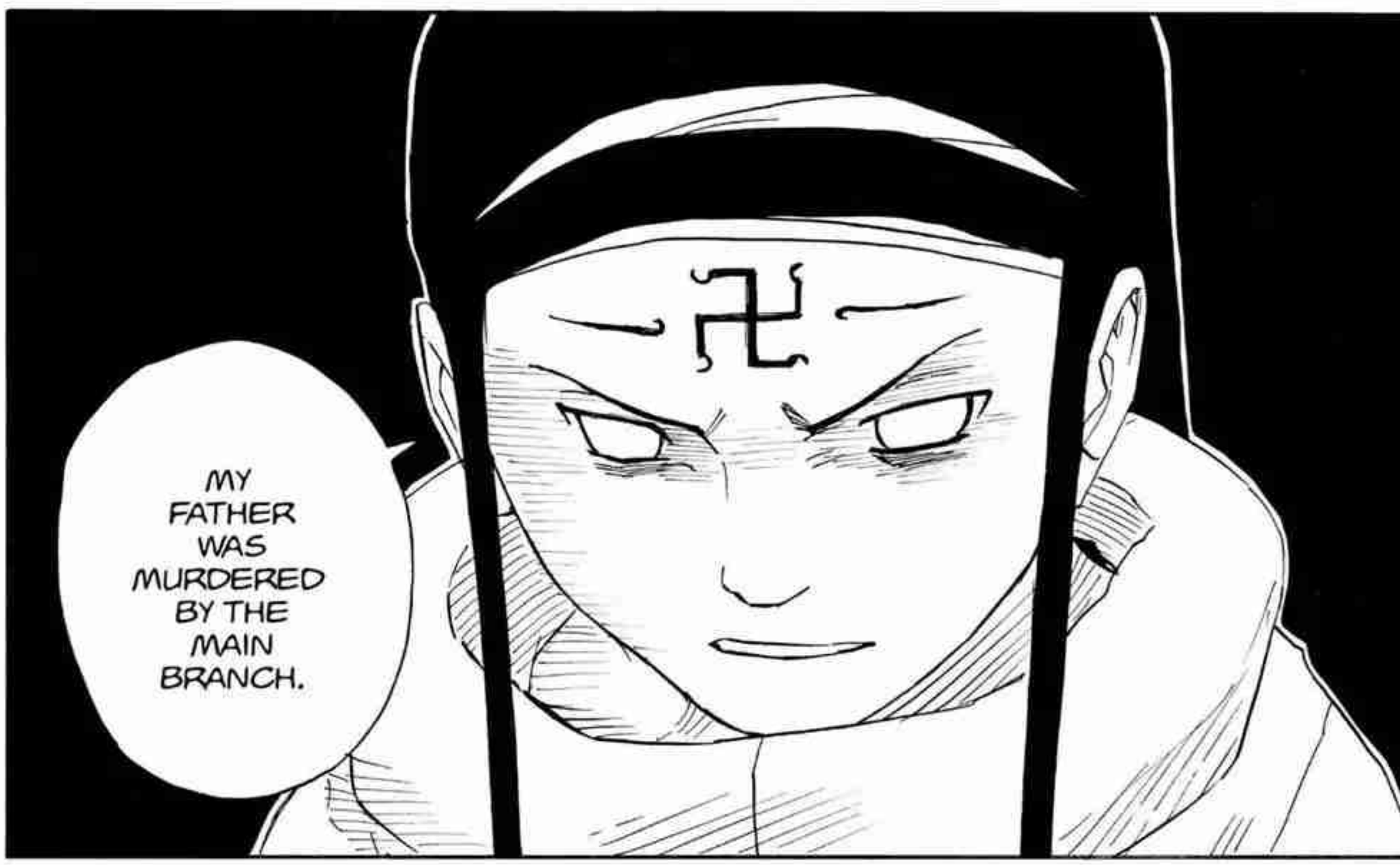

...AND THEN...
...THE INCIDENT OCCURRED.

...!!

...

HEH
HEH...

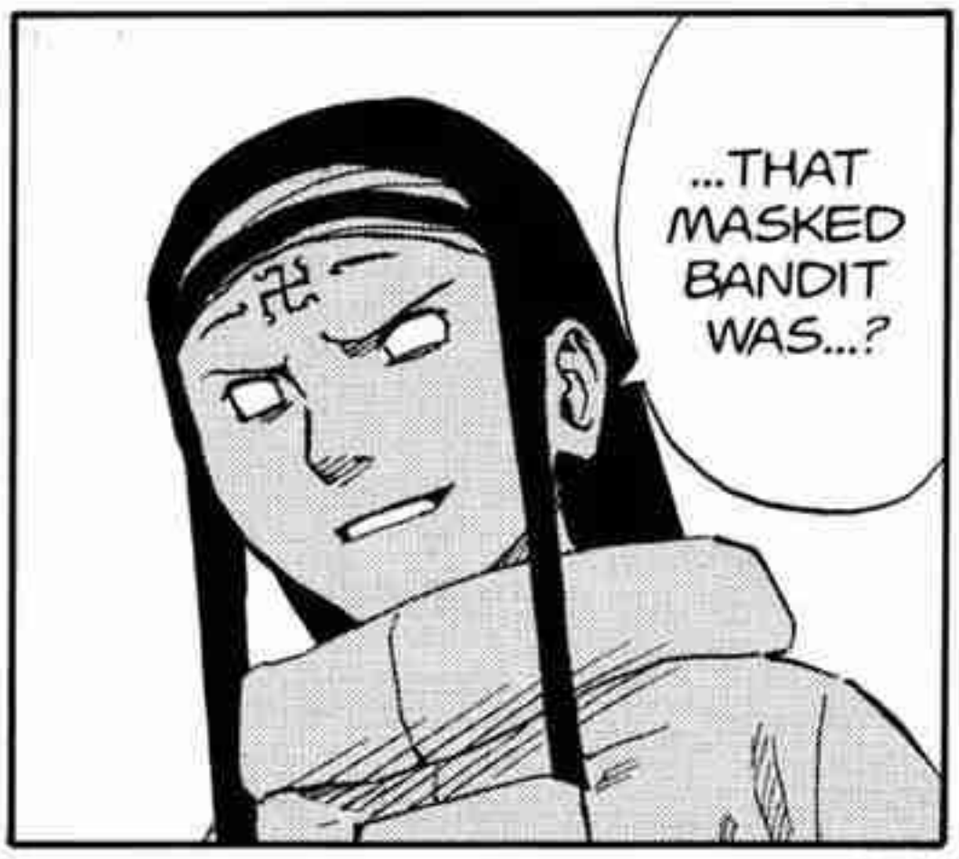
!!!


MY
FATHER
WAS
MURDERED
BY THE
MAIN
BRANCH.

WHAT?!

...AND KILLED THE PERPE-TRATOR.
LORD HIASHI RUSHED TO THE SCENE IMMEDI-ATELY...

ONE NIGHT... SOMEONE TRIED TO KIDNAP LADY HINATA.


...THAT MASKED BANDIT WAS...?

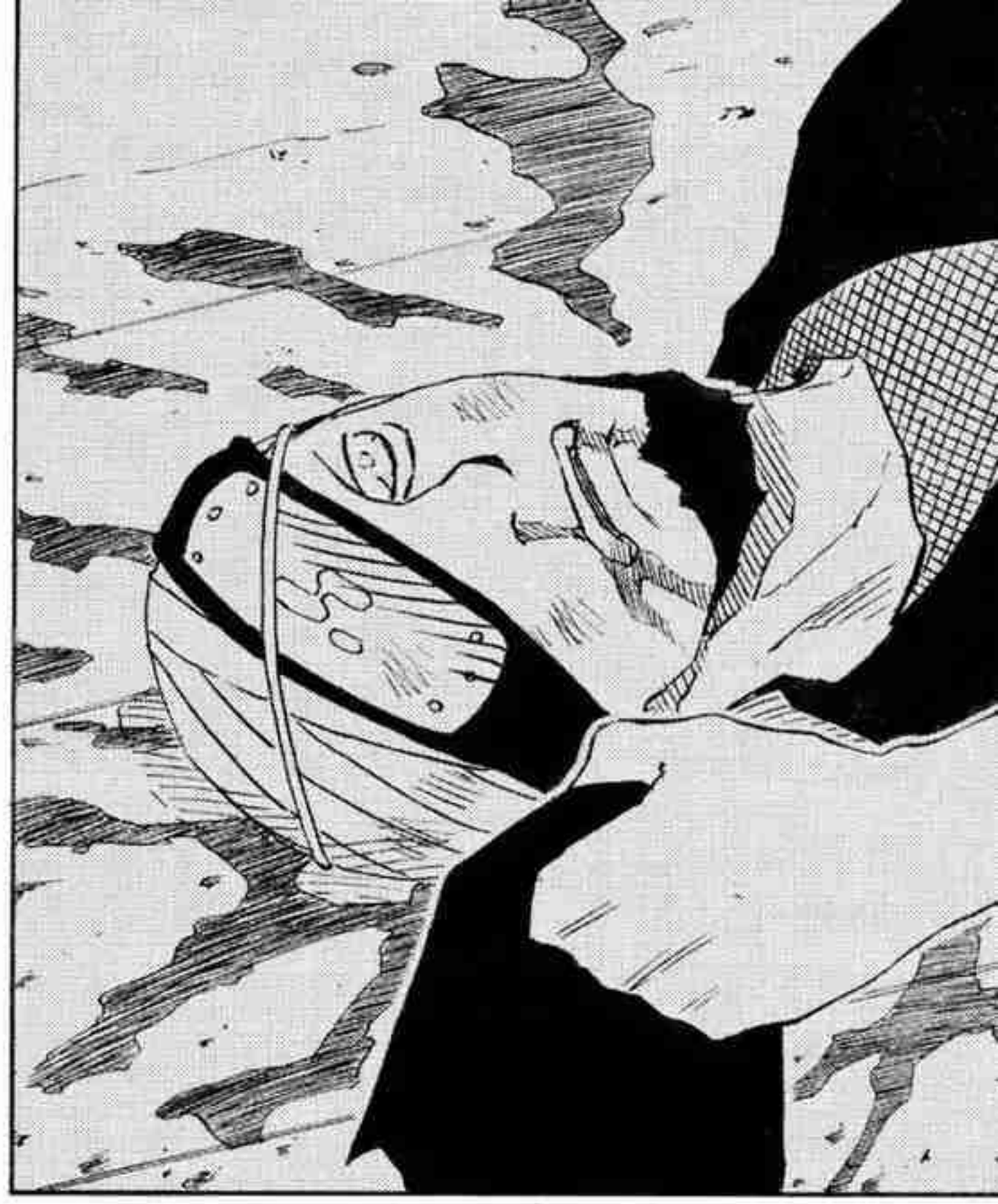
AND WHOM DO YOU SUPPOSE...

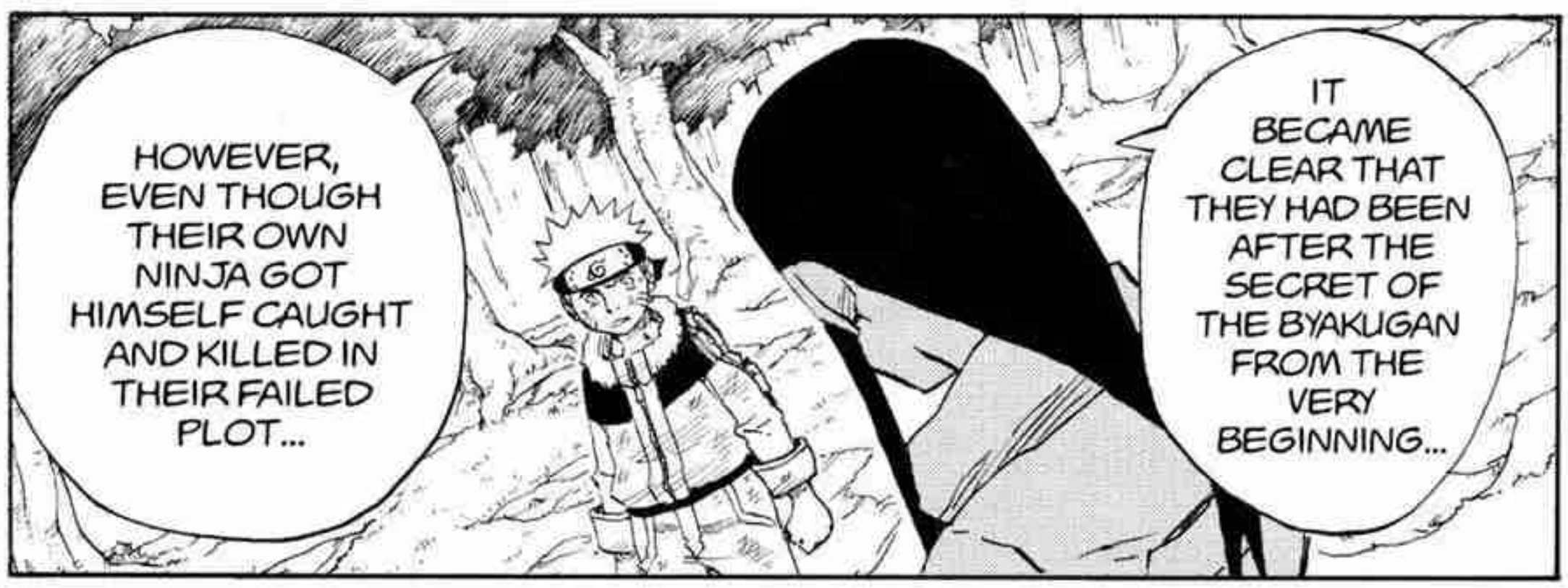
IT WAS...

...?

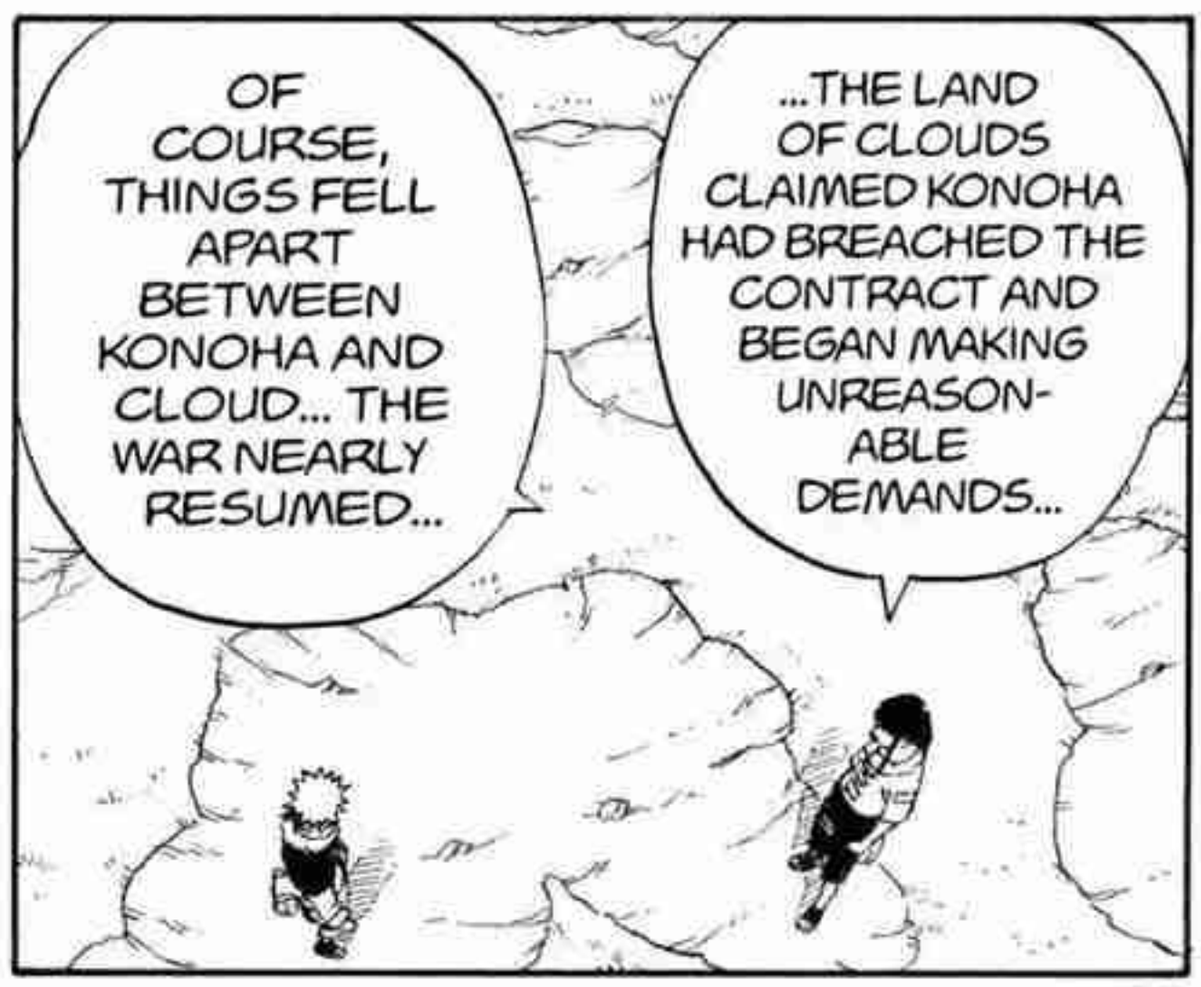
...WITH WHOM WE HAD JUST SIGNED THE ALLIANCE TREATY.
...THE SHINOBI RULER OF THE LAND OF CLOUDS...

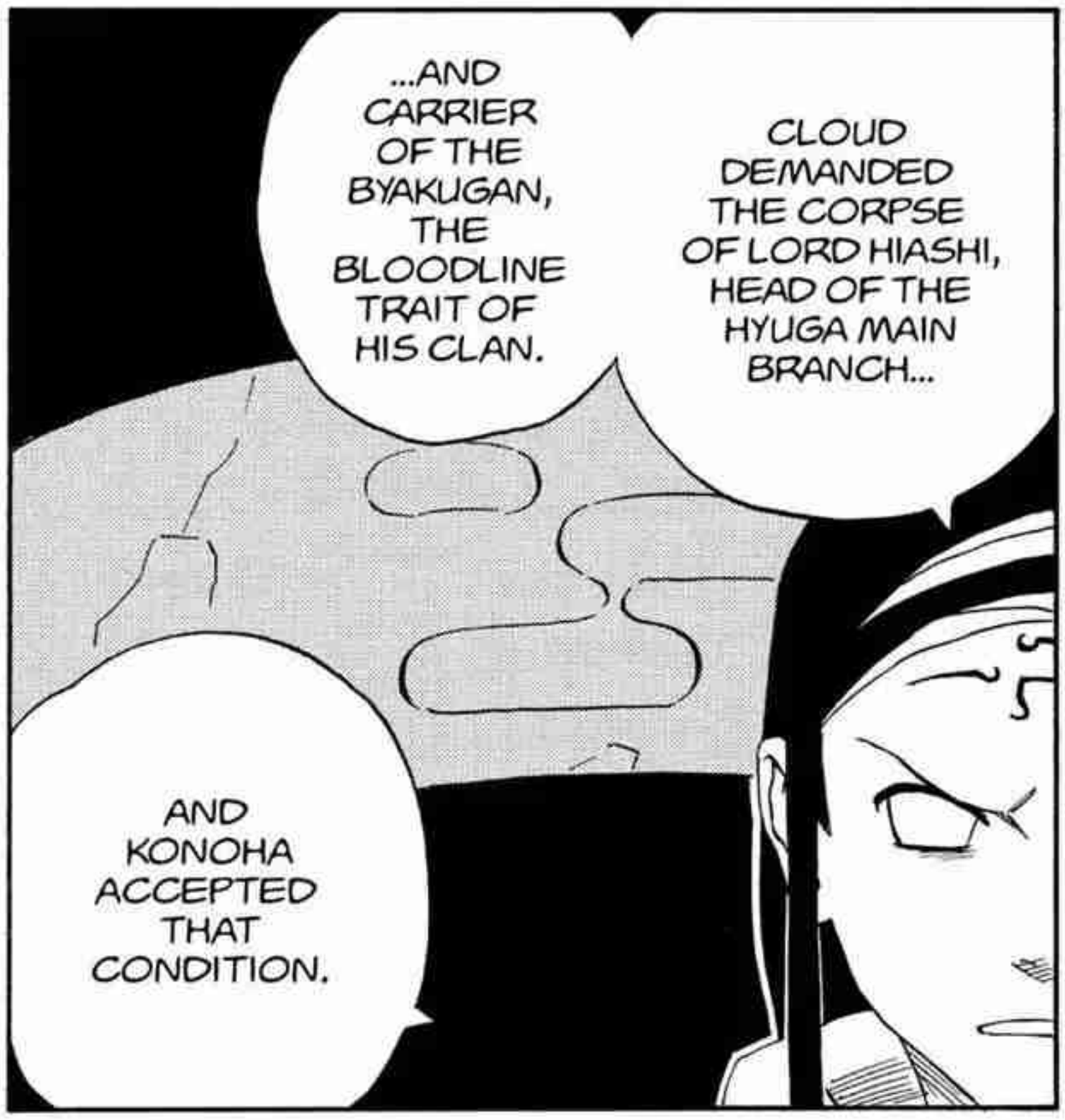
!!



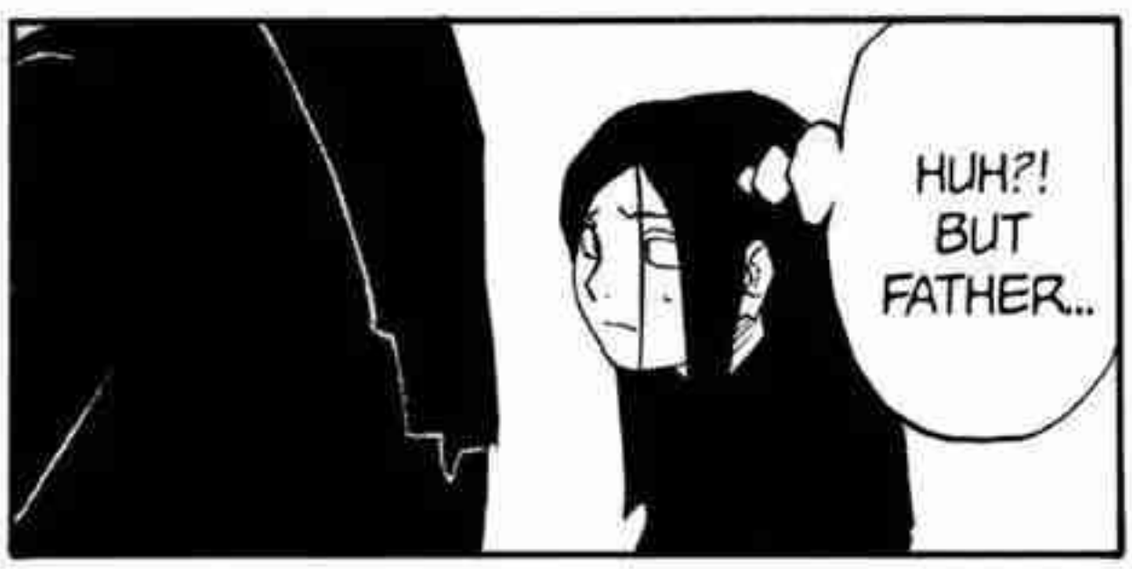

HOWEVER, EVEN THOUGH THEIR OWN NINJA GOT HIMSELF CAUGHT AND KILLED IN THEIR FAILED PLOT...
IT BECAME CLEAR THAT THEY HAD BEEN AFTER THE SECRET OF THE BYAKUGAN FROM THE VERY BEGINNING...

KONOHA MADE A BACKROOM BARGAIN WITH CLOUD.
BUT... EAGER TO AVOID BATTLE... AN AGREEMENT WAS REACHED.


OF COURSE, THINGS FELL APART BETWEEN KONOHA AND CLOUD... THE WAR NEARLY RESUMED...
...THE LAND OF CLOUDS CLAIMED KONOHA HAD BREACHED THE CONTRACT AND BEGAN MAKING UNREASON-ABLE DEMANDS...


...AND CARRIER OF THE BYAKUGAN, THE BLOODLINE TRAIT OF HIS CLAN.
CLOUD DEMANDED THE CORPSE OF LORD HIASHI, HEAD OF THE HYUGA MAIN BRANCH...
AND KONOHA ACCEPTED THAT CONDITION.

BARGAIN...?


HUH?! BUT FATHER...

...!

WAR WAS SAFELY AVERTED...

...

...

...HE WAS MURDERED TO SERVE AS HYUGA HIASHI'S BODY DOUBLE!

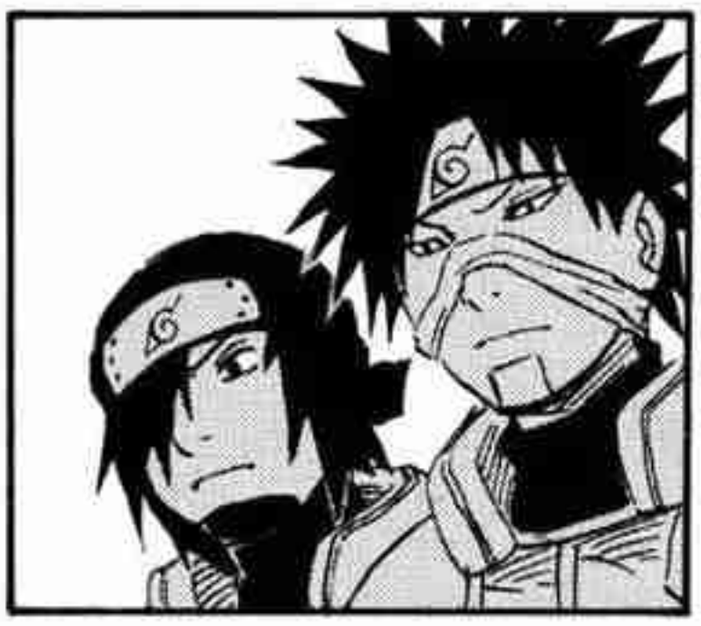
...THANKS TO MY FATHER, WHO WAS SACRIFICED TO PROTECT THE MAIN BRANCH...

THE ONLY WAY TO ESCAPE THIS ABOMINABLE CURSE MARK...

...IS TO DIE.

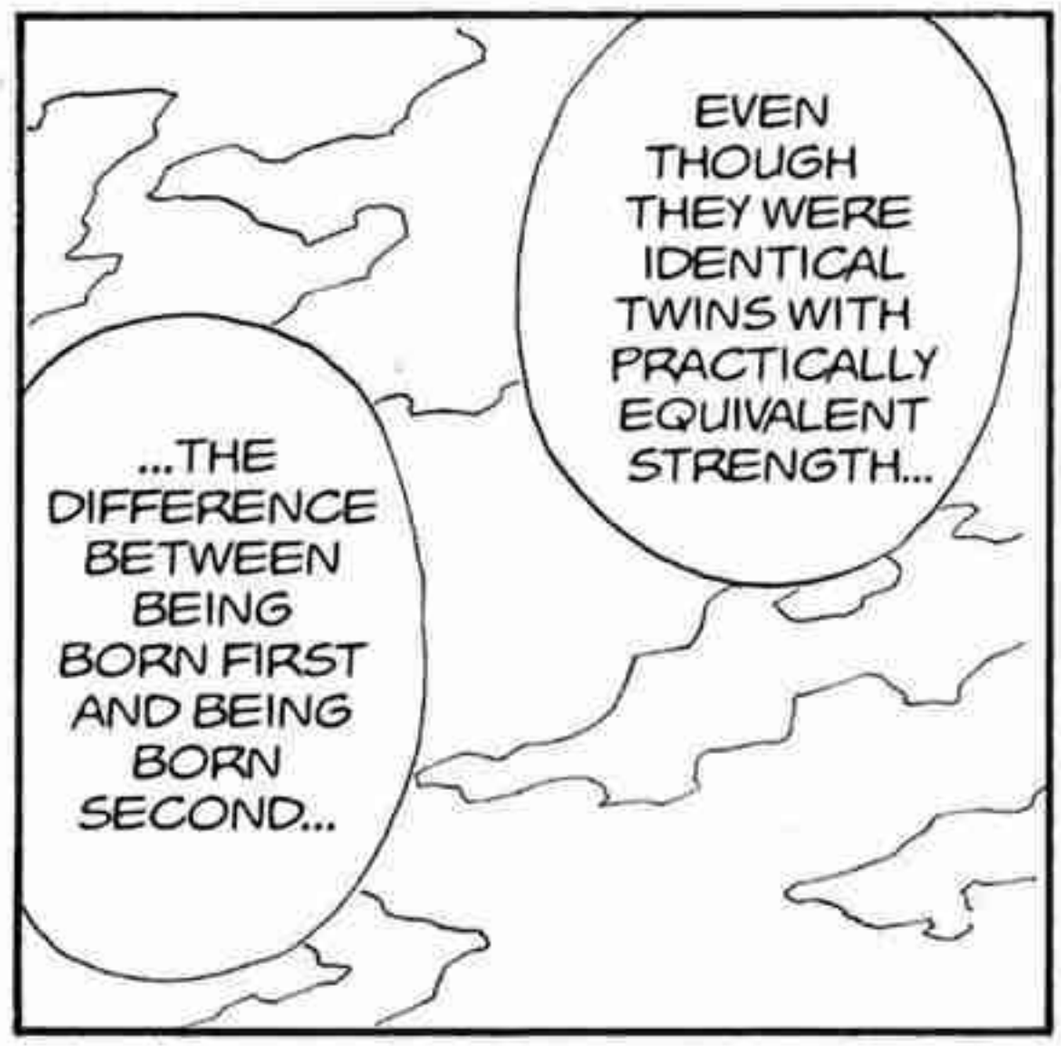
...!

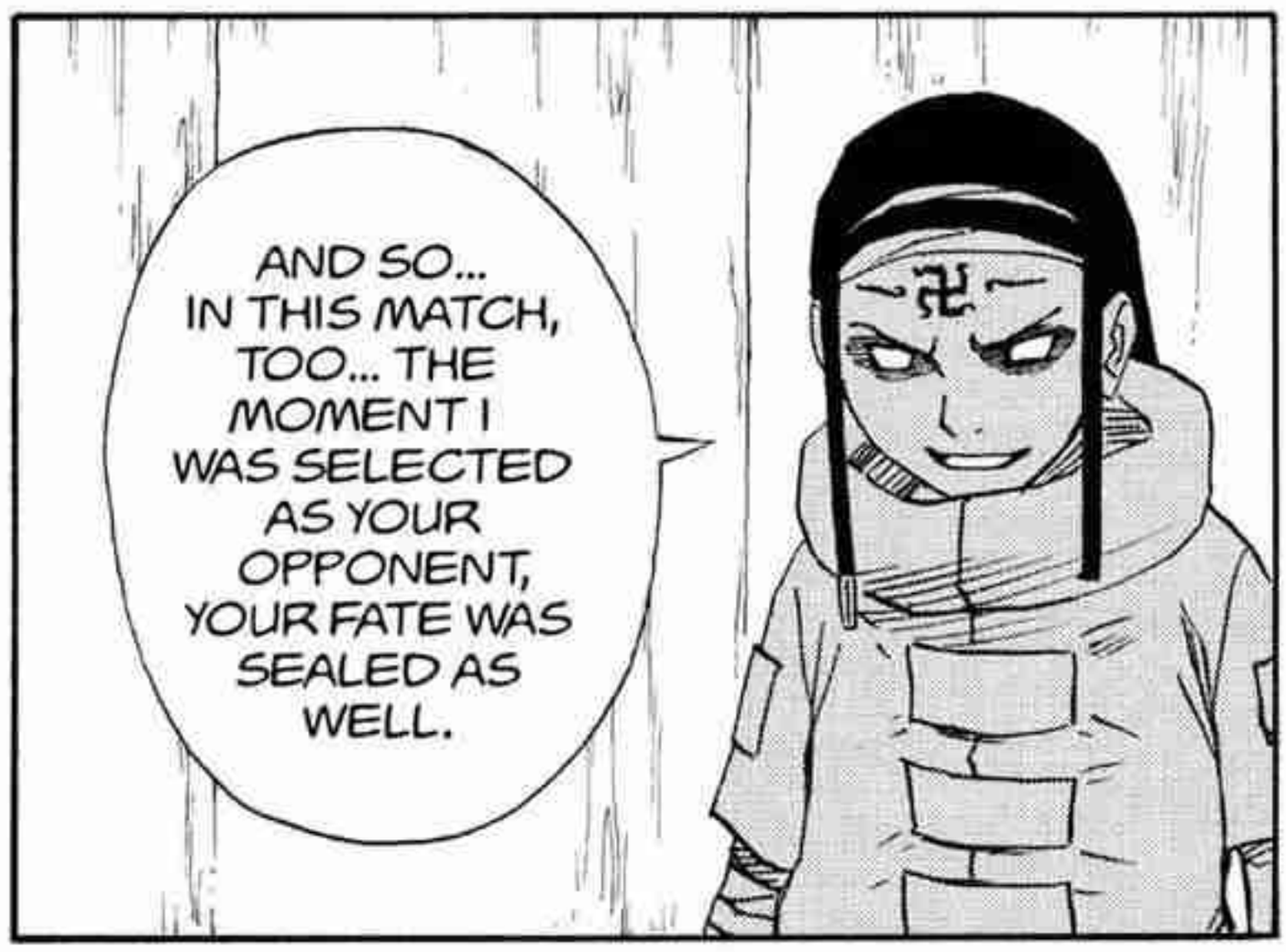
HEH...



READ
THIS
WAY

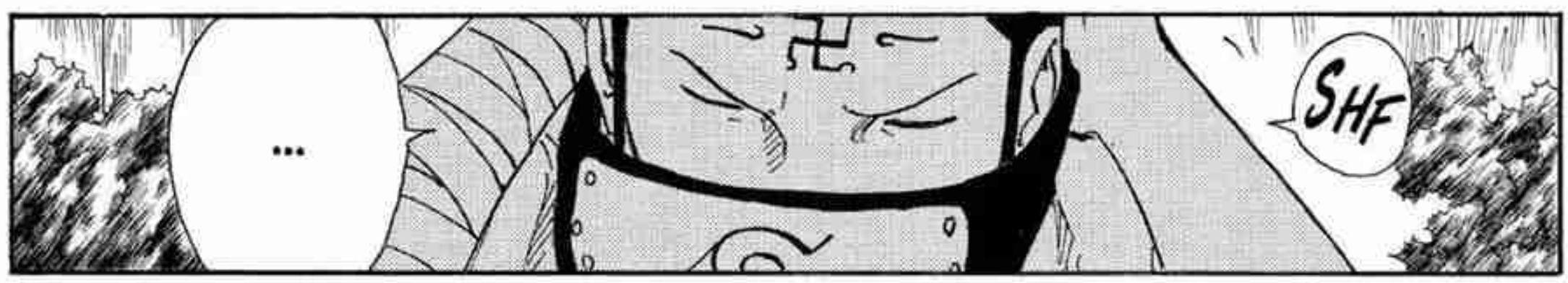
...SEALED EACH OF THEIR FATES FOREVER.


EVEN THOUGH THEY WERE IDENTICAL TWINS WITH PRACTICALLY EQUIVALENT STRENGTH...
...THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BEING BORN FIRST AND BEING BORN SECOND...


AND SO... IN THIS MATCH, TOO... THE MOMENT I WAS SELECTED AS YOUR OPPONENT, YOUR FATE WAS SEALED AS WELL.

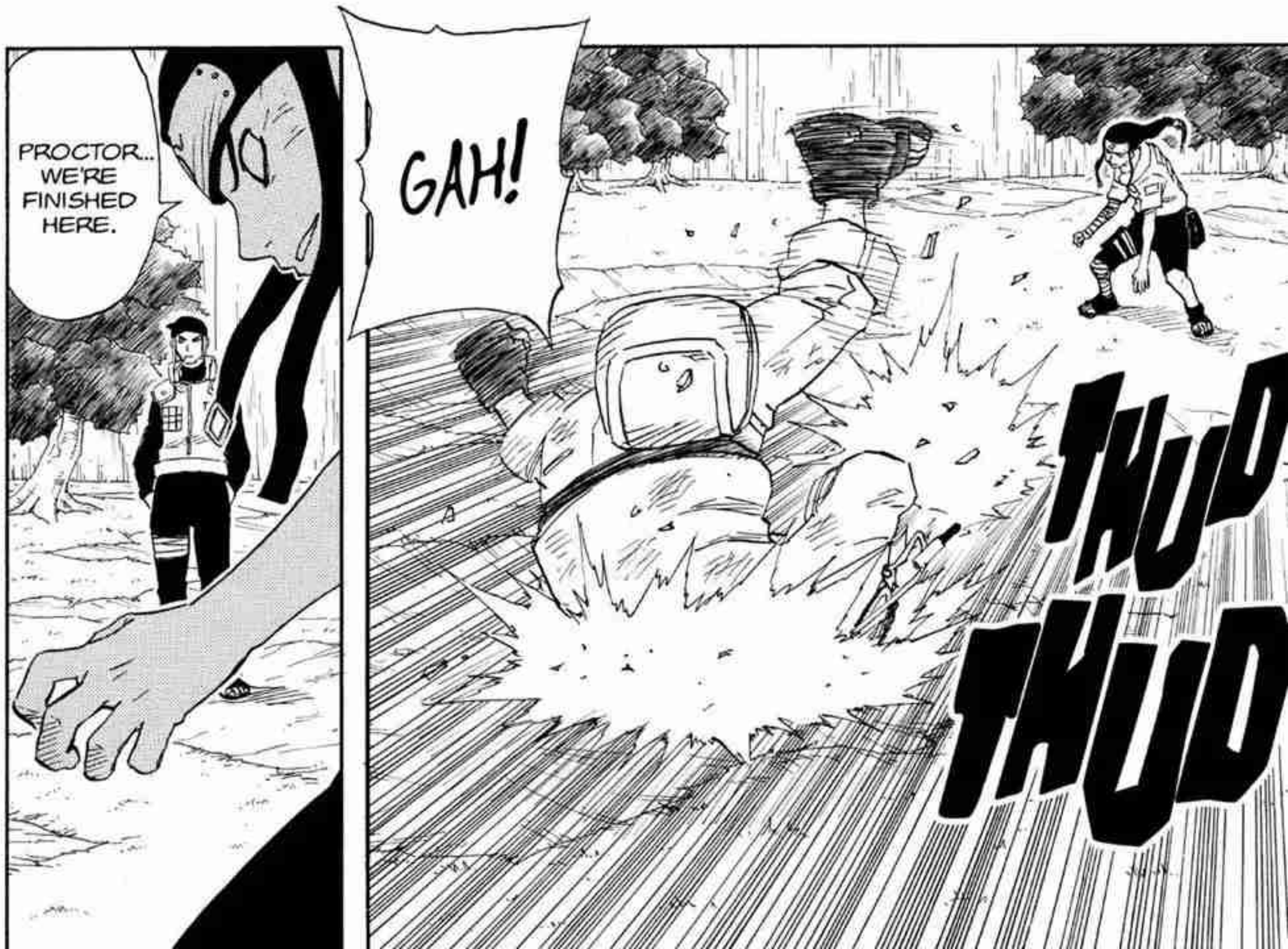
...

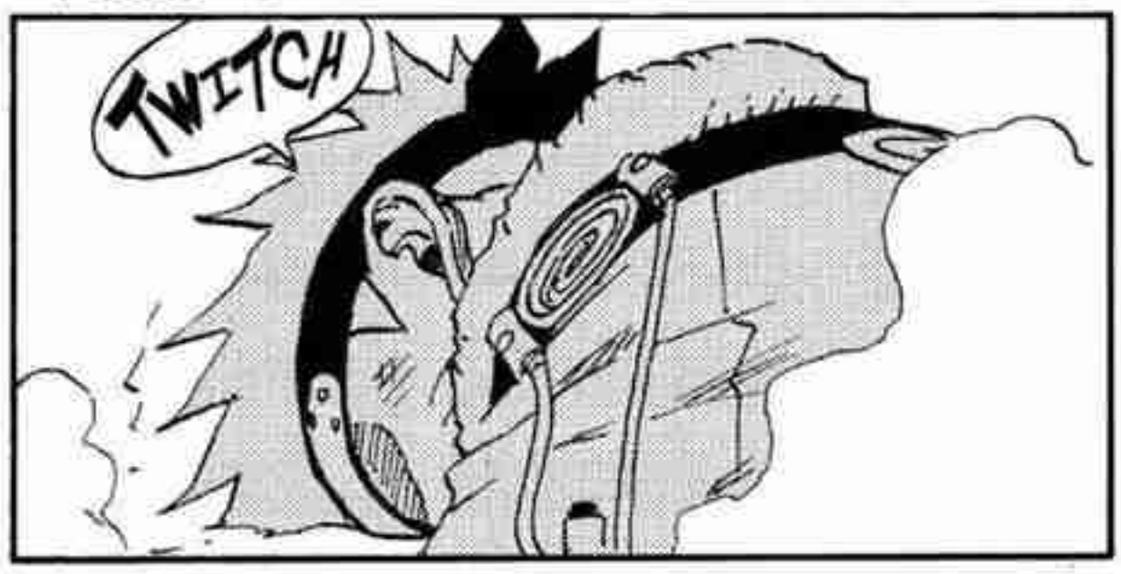
Number 103: The Failure!!



Number 103: The Failure!!

POW




TWITCH

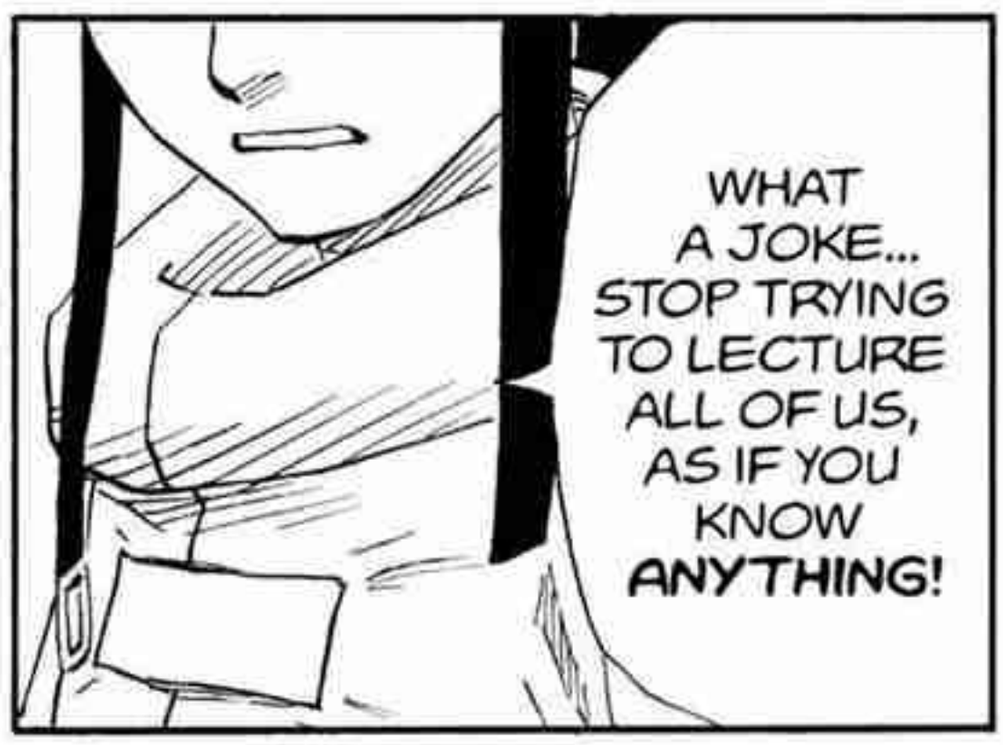
...D... DON'T YOU TURN YOUR BACK...

WHAT A FAILURE...
HMPH...
TMP

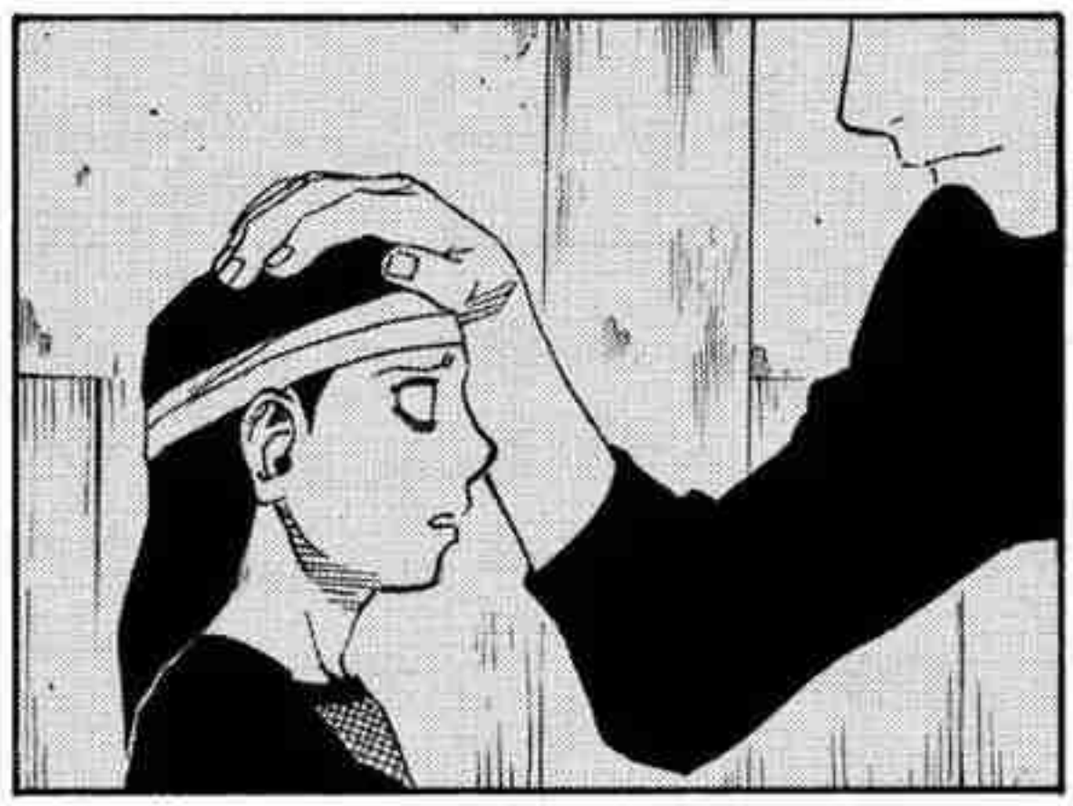
HEH... I THINK I'VE HEARD THAT LINE BEFORE...

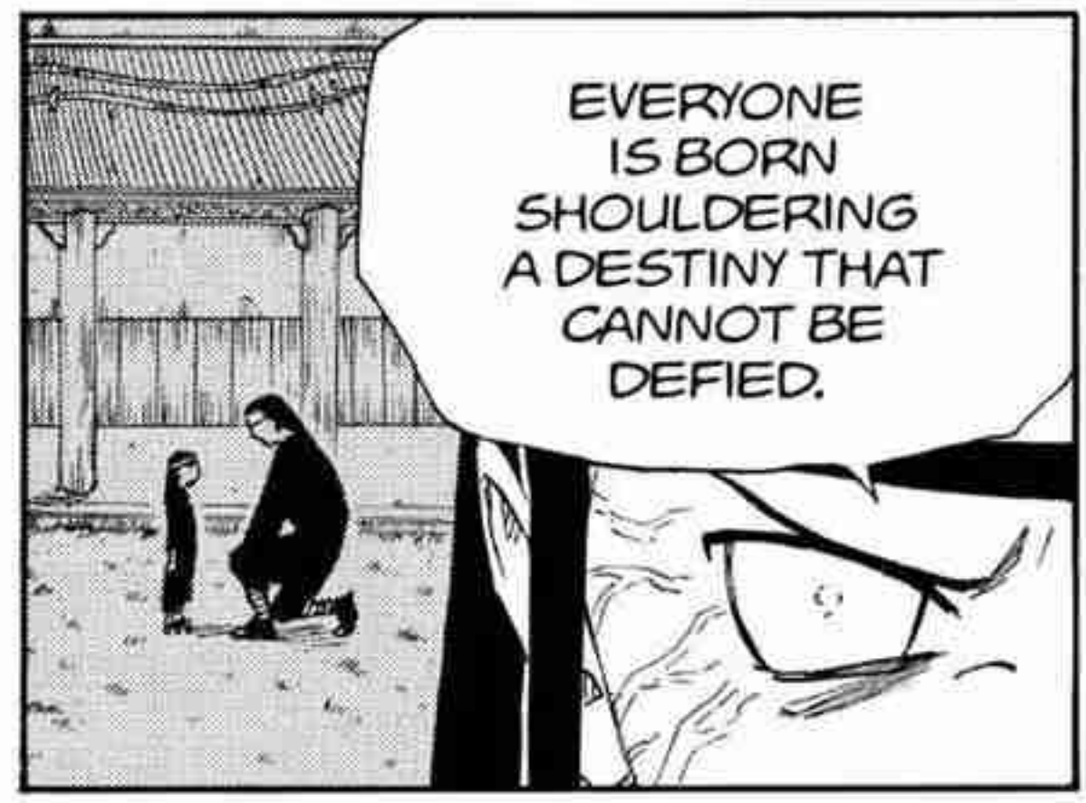
I NEVER... GO BACK ON MY WORD...
GAGK
I WON'T RUN AWAY...
WOBBLE

NARUTO...


WHAT A JOKE... STOP TRYING TO LECTURE ALL OF US, AS IF YOU KNOW ANYTHING!

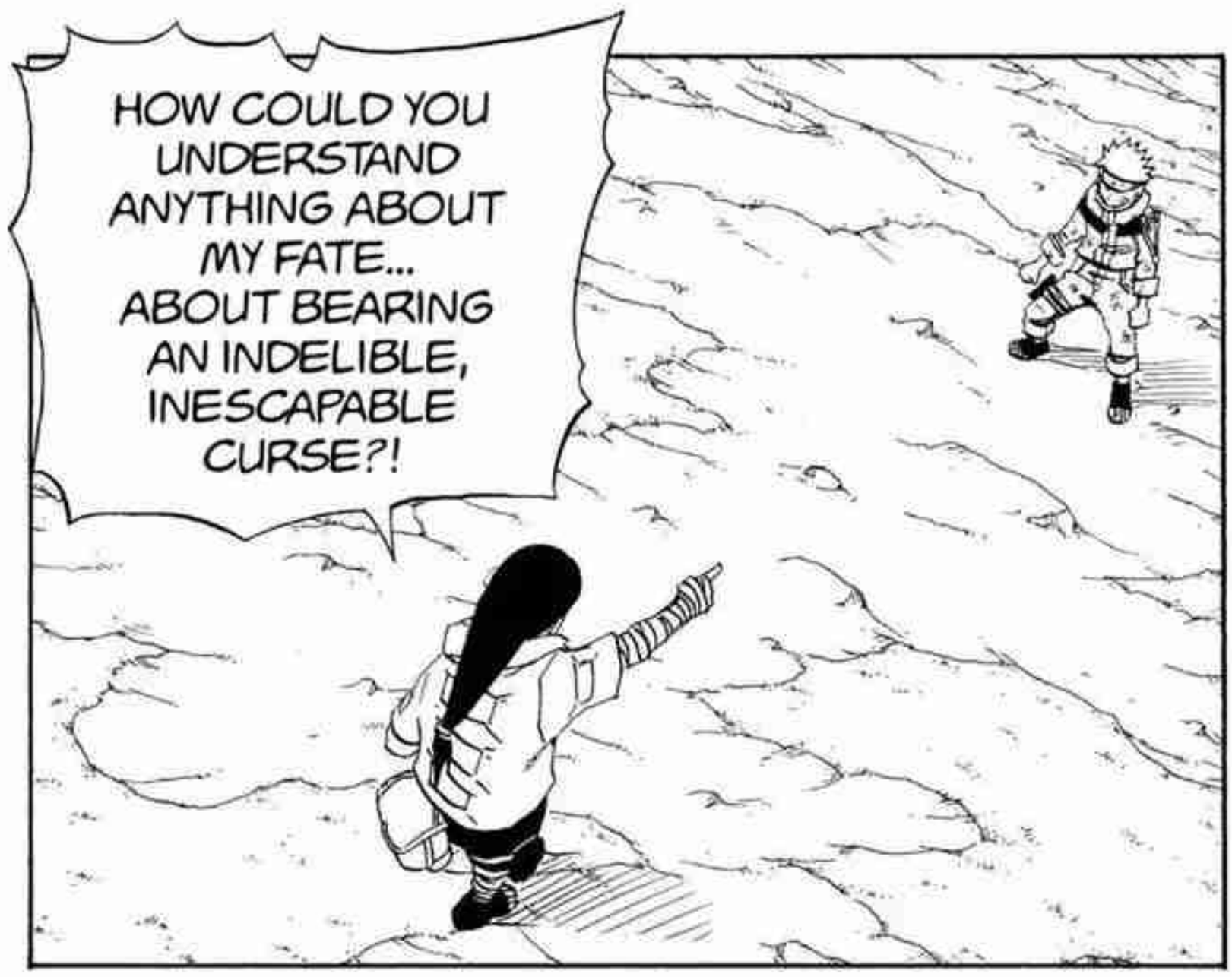
UGK
UGK
HUF
I WON'T LOSE TO SOMEONE WHO BELIEVES IN RESIGNING HIMSELF TO FATE...!
I REFUSE TO BE DEFEATED BY A COWARD LIKE YOU...

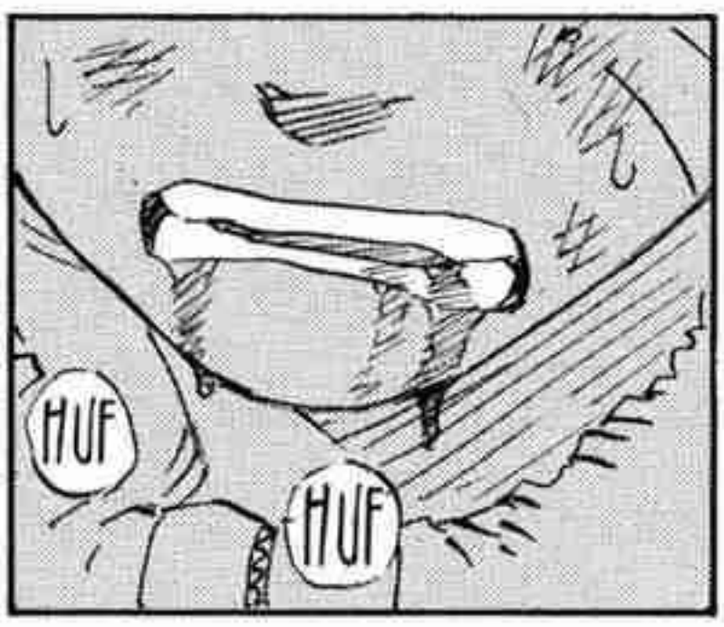


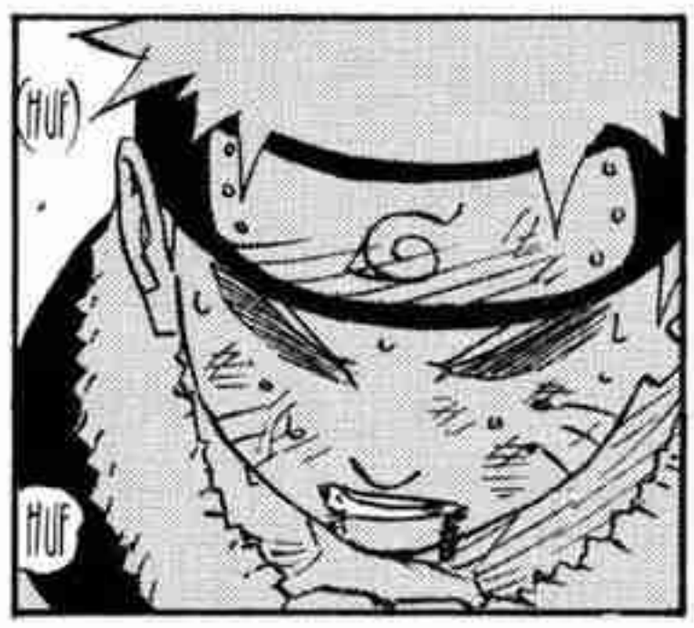

EVERYONE IS BORN SHOULDERING A DESTINY THAT CANNOT BE DEFIED.

...I WISH YOU COULD HAVE BEEN BORN INTO THE MAIN BRANCH...

...MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE, YOU'VE BEEN BLESSED WITH THE GENIUS OF THE HYUGA CLAN...
NEJI... YOU...


HOW COULD YOU UNDERSTAND ANYTHING ABOUT MY FATE... ABOUT BEARING AN INDELIBLE, INESCAPABLE CURSE?!


HUF
HUF


HUF
HUF

HUF
HUF
HUF

ACTUALLY...

HUF

HUF

HUF

I UNDERSTAND IT PRETTY WELL...

...YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY ONE WHO'S "SPECIAL," YOU KNOW!

HMPH!

YOU'RE THE ONE WHO NEEDS TO QUIT LECTURING...

SHE'S TRYING SO HARD TO CHANGE HERSELF... TO EARN RESPECT...

THAT'S WHY SHE HUNG IN THERE DURING THAT FIGHT WITH YOU, EVEN THOUGH SHE WAS COUGHING UP BLOOD!

...!

EVEN THOUGH SHE'S IN THE MAIN BRANCH, HINATA HAS BEEN SUFFERING JUST AS MUCH AS YOU!

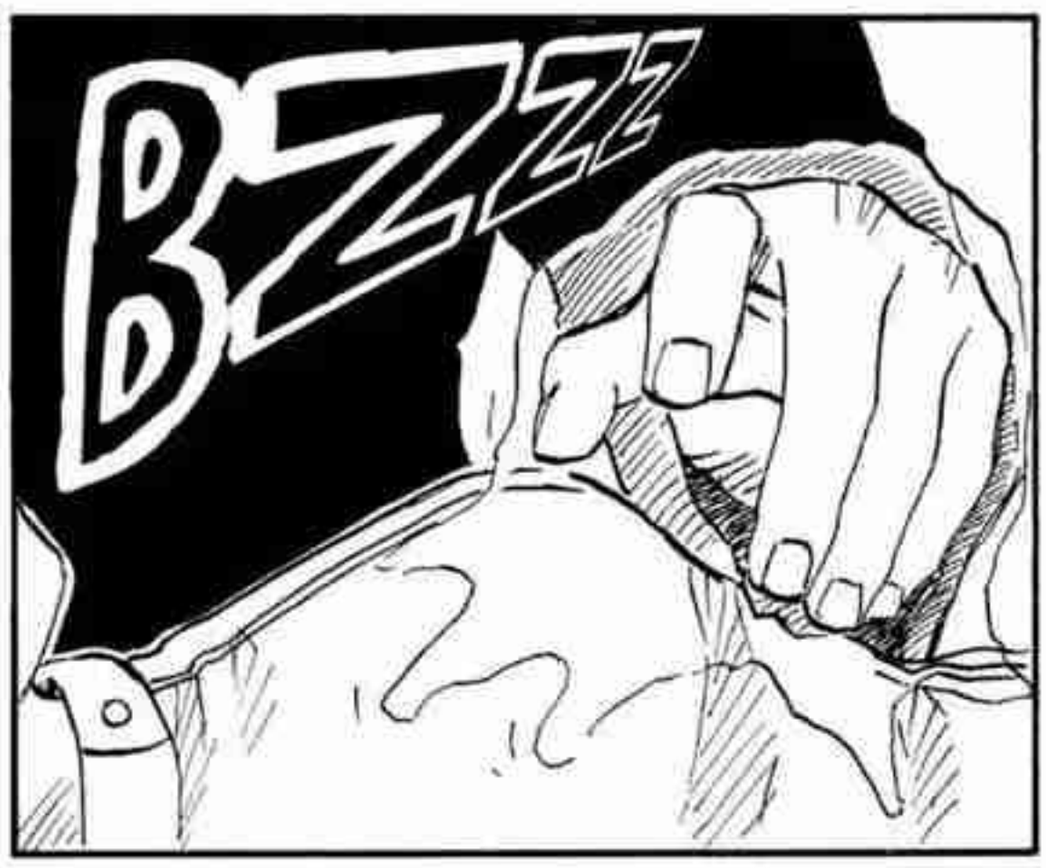
TWITCH

!!!

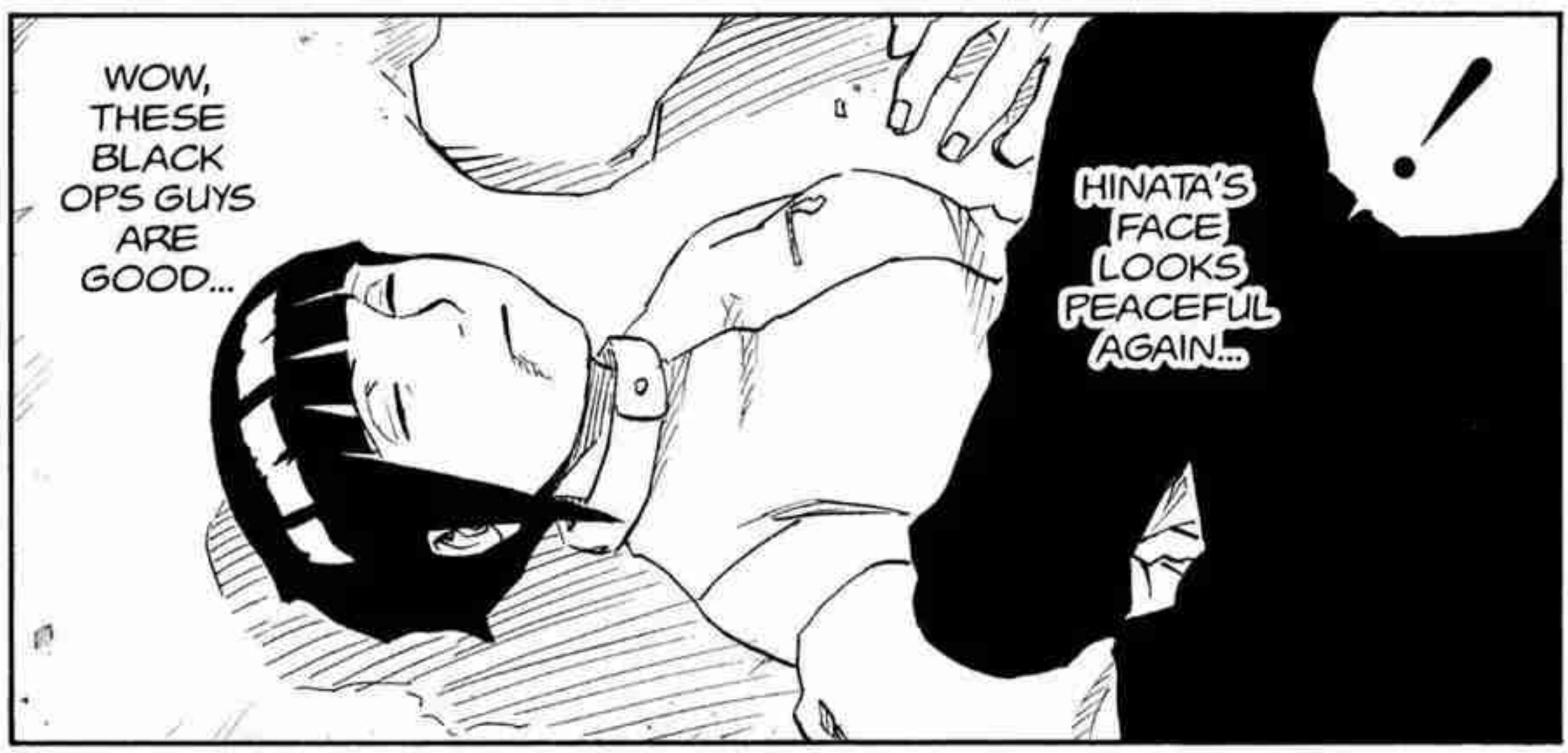
THE CADET BRANCH IS SUPPOSED TO PROTECT THE MAIN BRANCH, BUT YOU USED THE EXAM AS AN EXCUSE TO BEAT UP HINATA...

IT SURE SEEMS LIKE YOU WERE TRYING TO DEFY YOUR FATE, TOO!

AND YOU...!


BZZZ

!!!


WOW, THESE BLACK OPS GUYS ARE GOOD...
HINATA'S FACE LOOKS PEACEFUL AGAIN...
!

FWSH
HUH?!

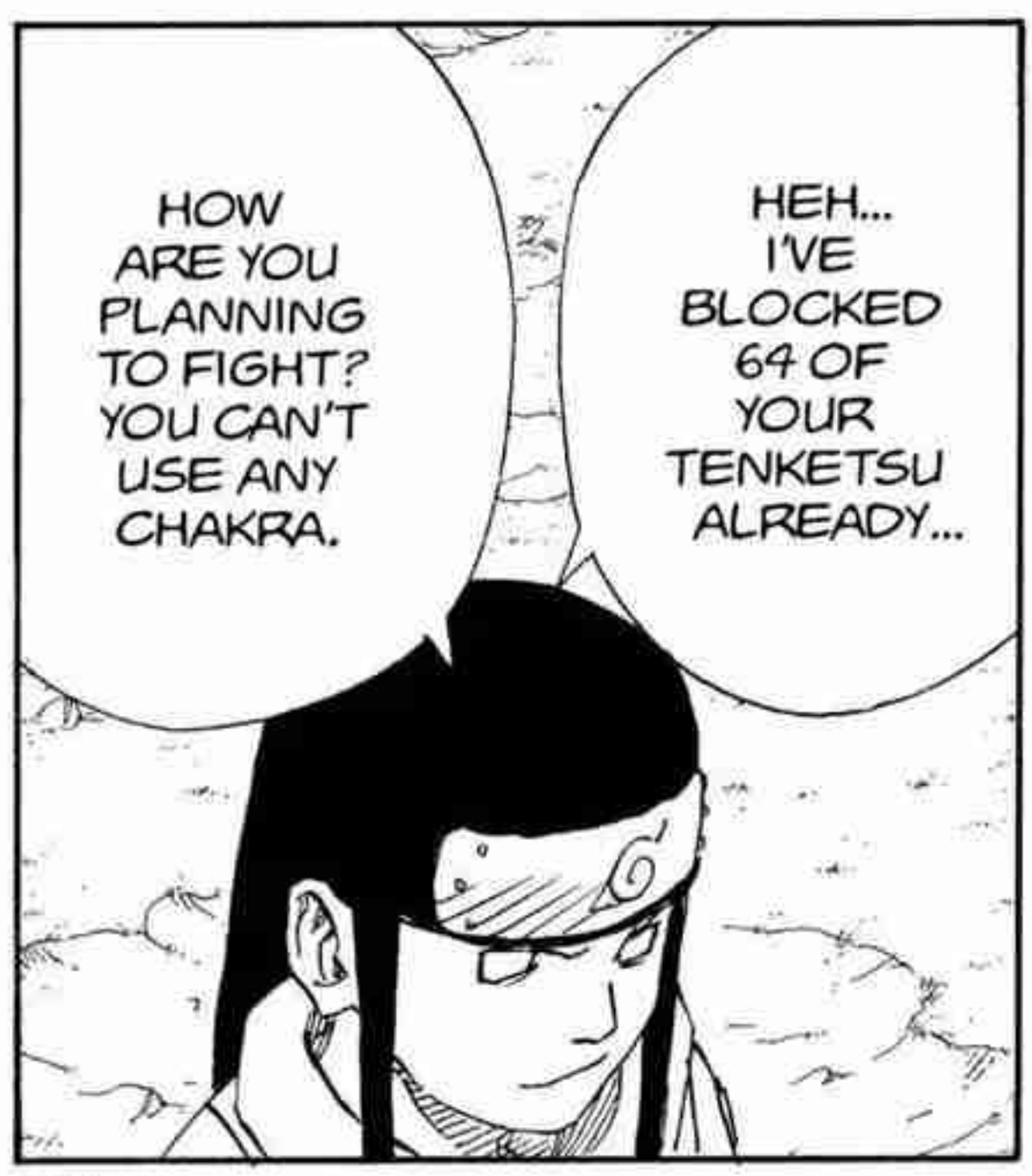
BUT SHE WON'T BE WATCHING ANY MORE MATCHES...!
SHE'LL BE FINE...

READ
THIS
WAY

SLUMP

ZAP

KOFF
KOFF


HOW ARE YOU PLANNING TO FIGHT? YOU CAN'T USE ANY CHAKRA.
HEH... I'VE BLOCKED 64 OF YOUR TENKETSU ALREADY...

!!

WELL...? ARE YOU ALL TALK, OR ARE YOU GOING TO TRY TO PROVE YOUR POINT?

SHUT UP! STOP ACTING ALL HIGH AND MIGHTY, WITH YOUR ALL-SEEING BYAKUGAN!

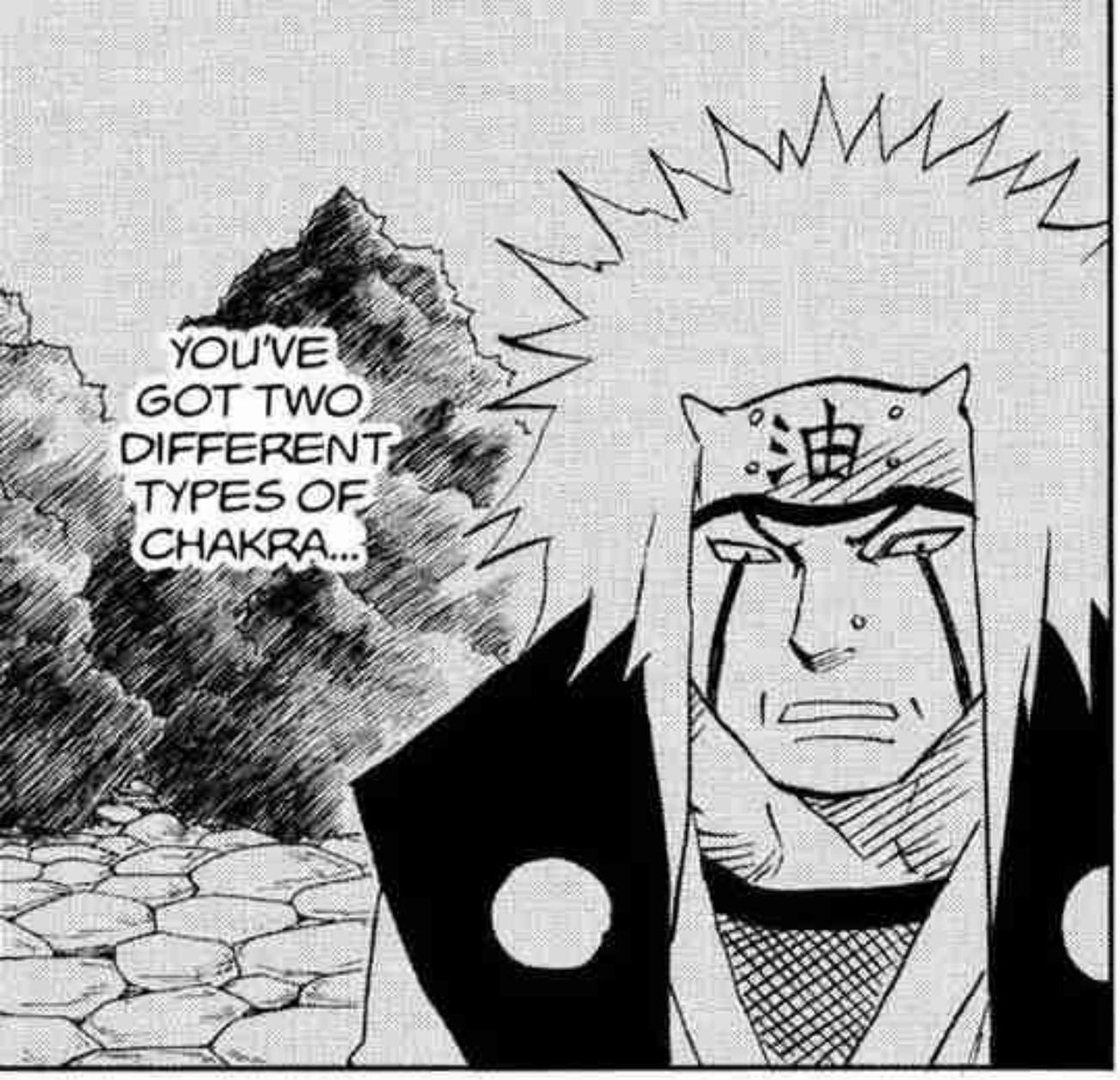
WHEN WE'RE THROUGH, YOU'LL END UP JUST LIKE LADY HINATA!
POP

BY KICKING YOUR BUTT!
SURE! I'LL PROVE IT TO YOU!

IT'S JUST LIKE THE TIMES I USED UP ALL OF MY CHAKRA DURING TRAINING...!
...CRAP! I'M TALKING A BIG GAME, BUT I CAN'T FEEL MY CHAKRA AT ALL...

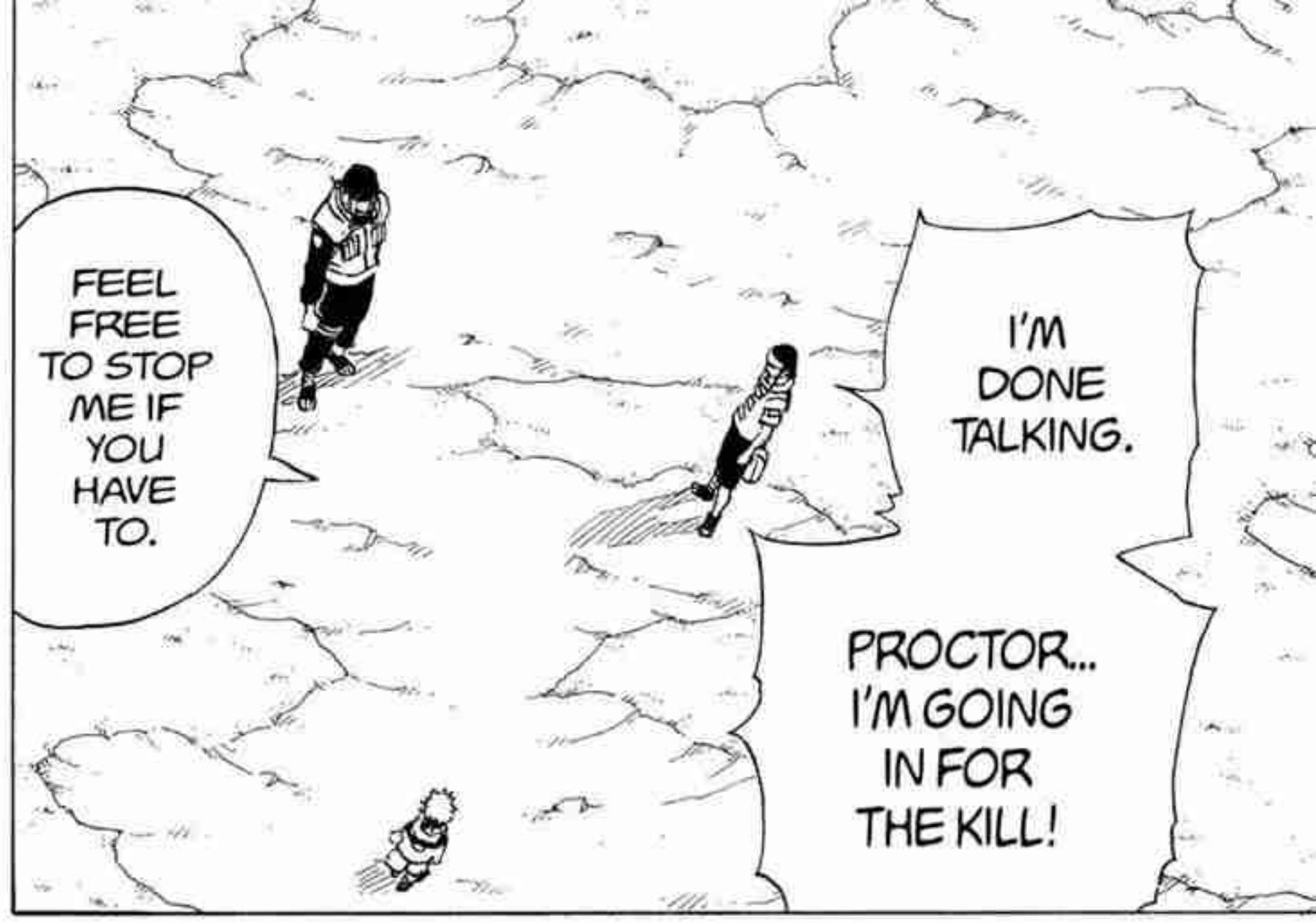
...

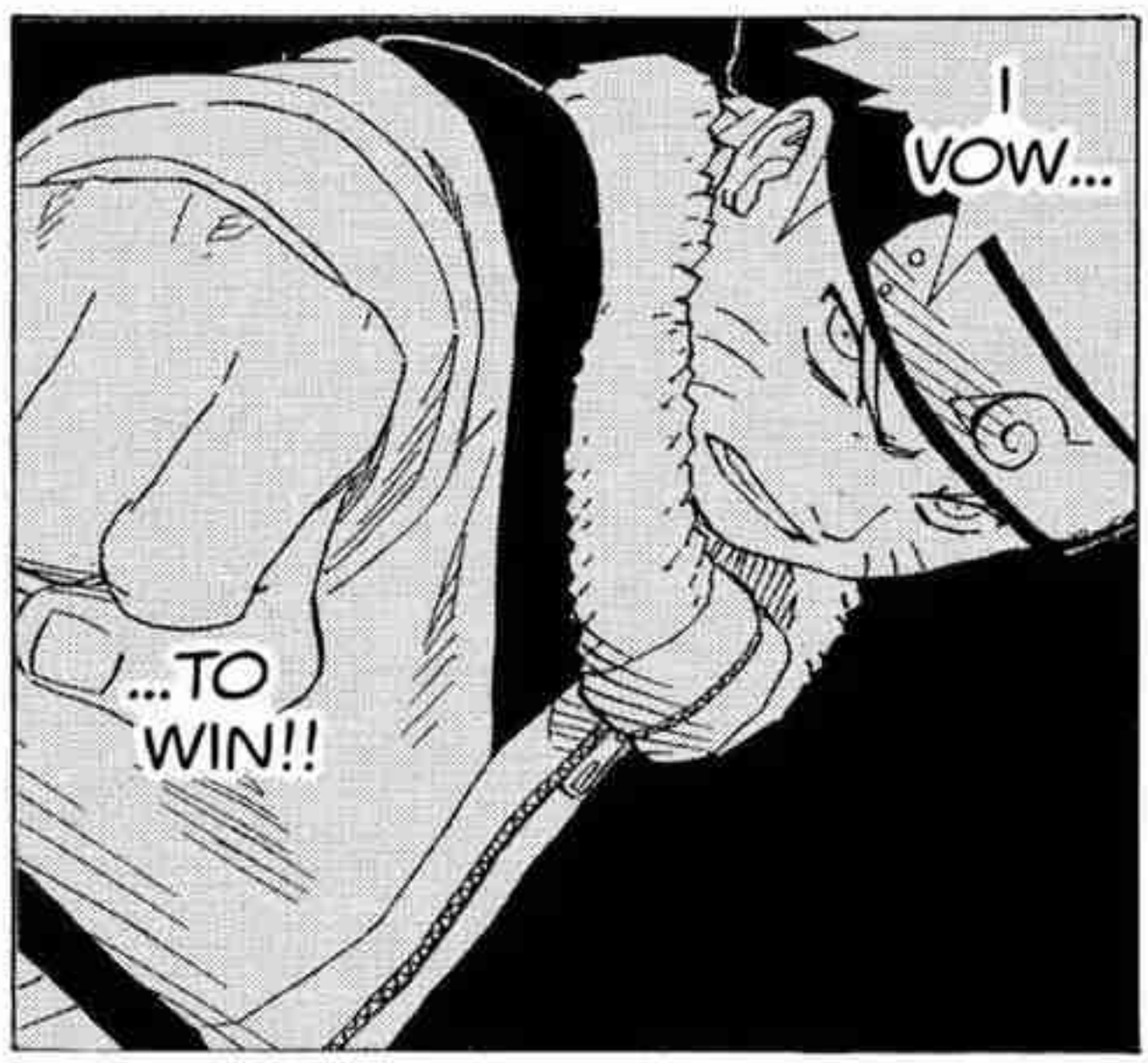
...



HEY, FOX... LEND ME YOUR STRENGTH...!!

SHEESH!
FEH...


FEEL FREE TO STOP ME IF YOU HAVE TO.
I'M DONE TALKING.
PROCTOR... I'M GOING IN FOR THE KILL!


I VOW...
...TO WIN!!

HYAAAH!
...RIGHT NOW... I CAN'T BEAR TO LOSE!

I'VE PRESSED YOUR TENKETSU...
IT'S USE-LESS...

I'VE GOT TO ...!
HYAAH!

...EVEN THOUGH HIS OPPONENT COULD VERY WELL BE ME! BUT EVEN IF IT'S YOU, NARUTO... I'LL HAVE NO REGRETS!
THE PROSPECT OF SEEING A FAILURE DEFEAT A GENIUS THROUGH SHEER FORCE OF WILL... IT REALLY MAKES YOU LOOK FORWARD TO THE FINAL ROUNDS...

YOU SHOULD COME WATCH ME BLOW NEJI AWAY!

...

WHY DO YOU KEEP TRYING SO HARD TO DEFY YOUR DESTINY?!
CAN I ASK YOU SOMETHING?
NGH...

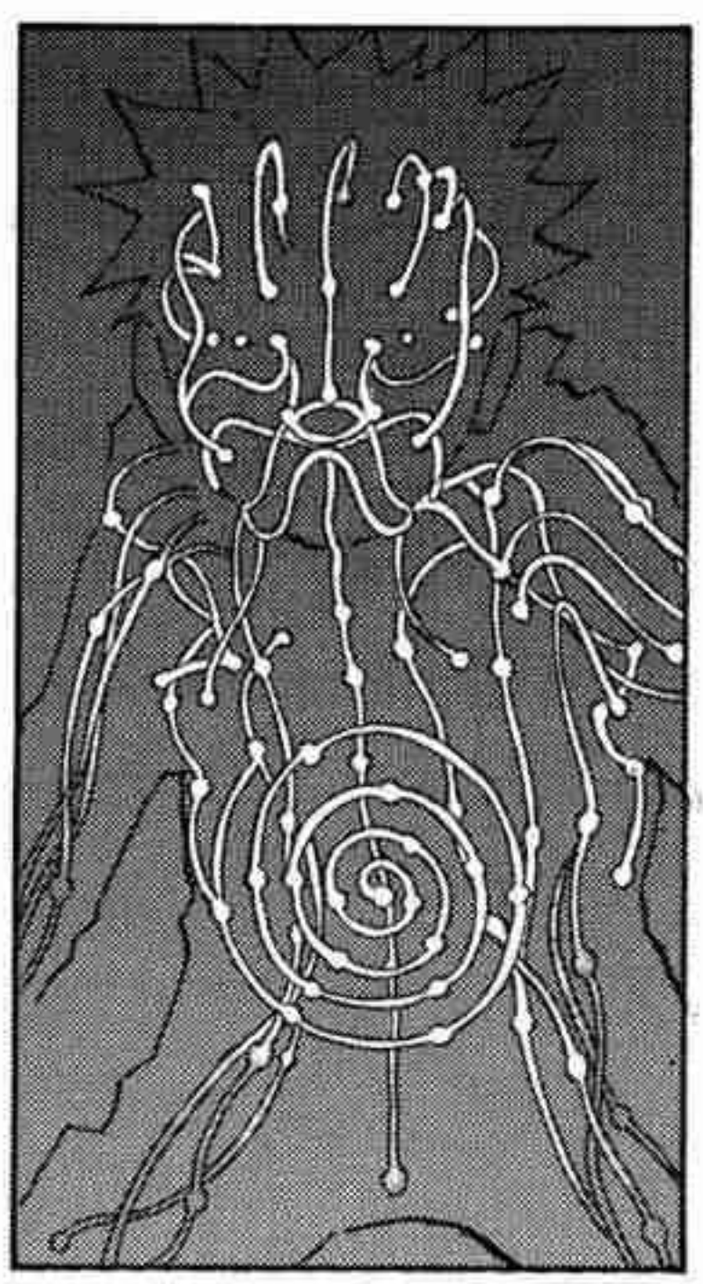
...! WAS A FAILURE!
HUF
BECAUSE SOMEBODY TOLD ME...

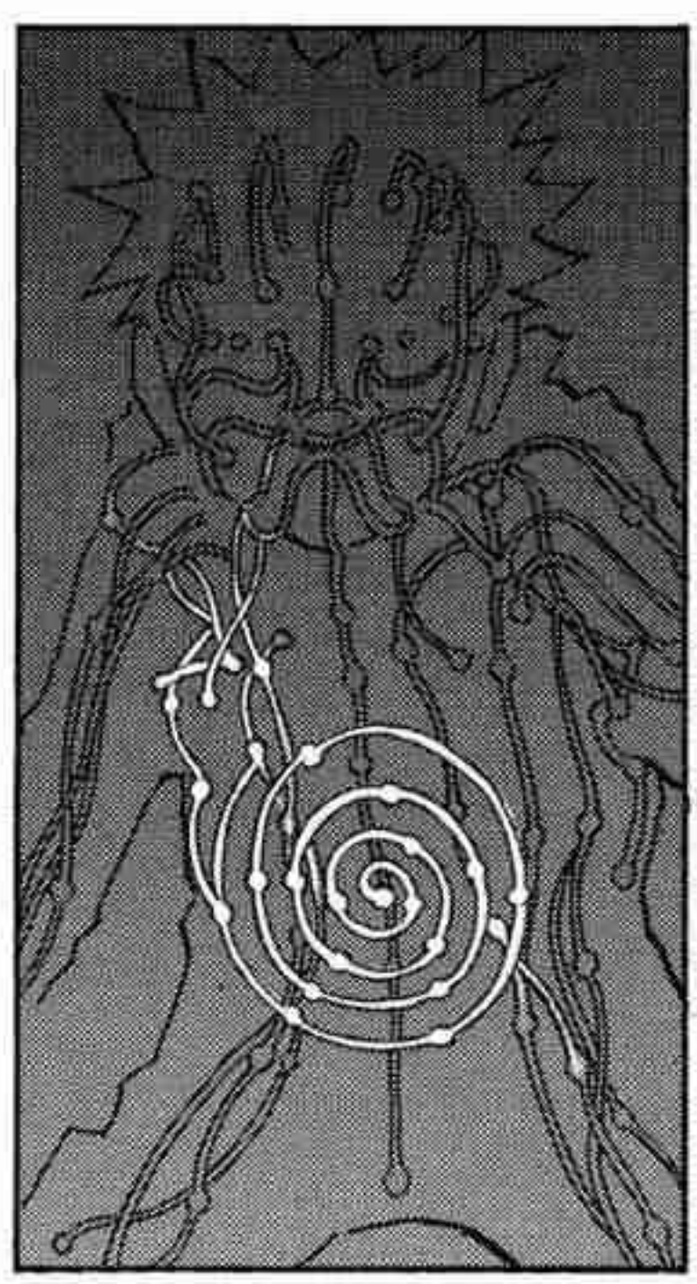
...!

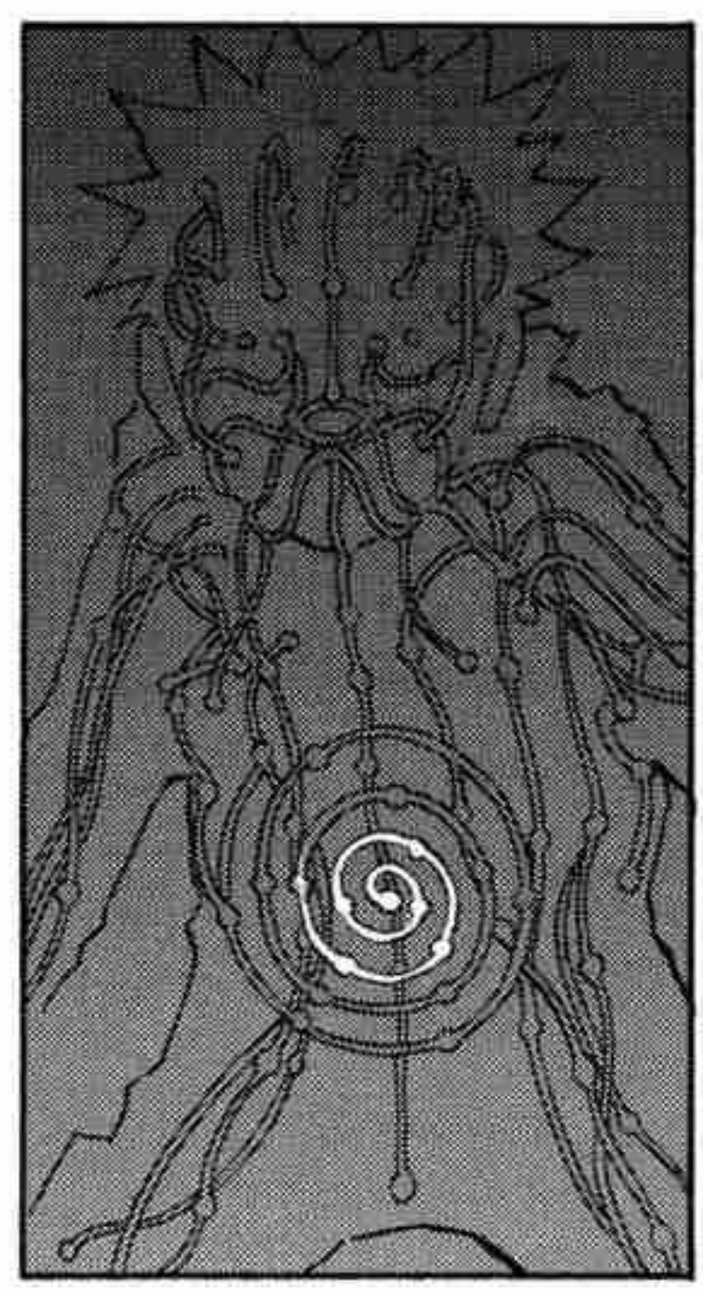
HYAAAH!!
ROAR

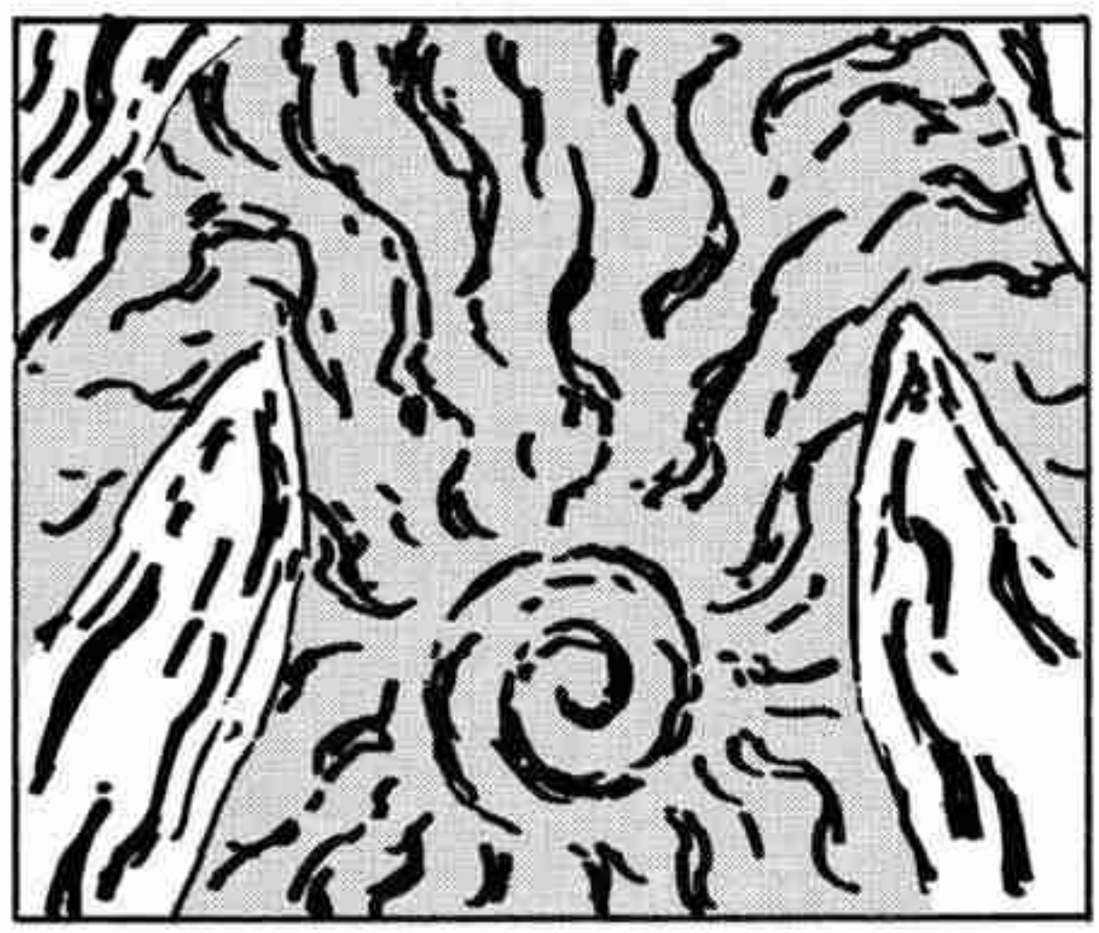
FSST

HIS CHAKRA IS OOZING OUT... WHAT'S GOING ON...?
...IMPOSSIBLE!

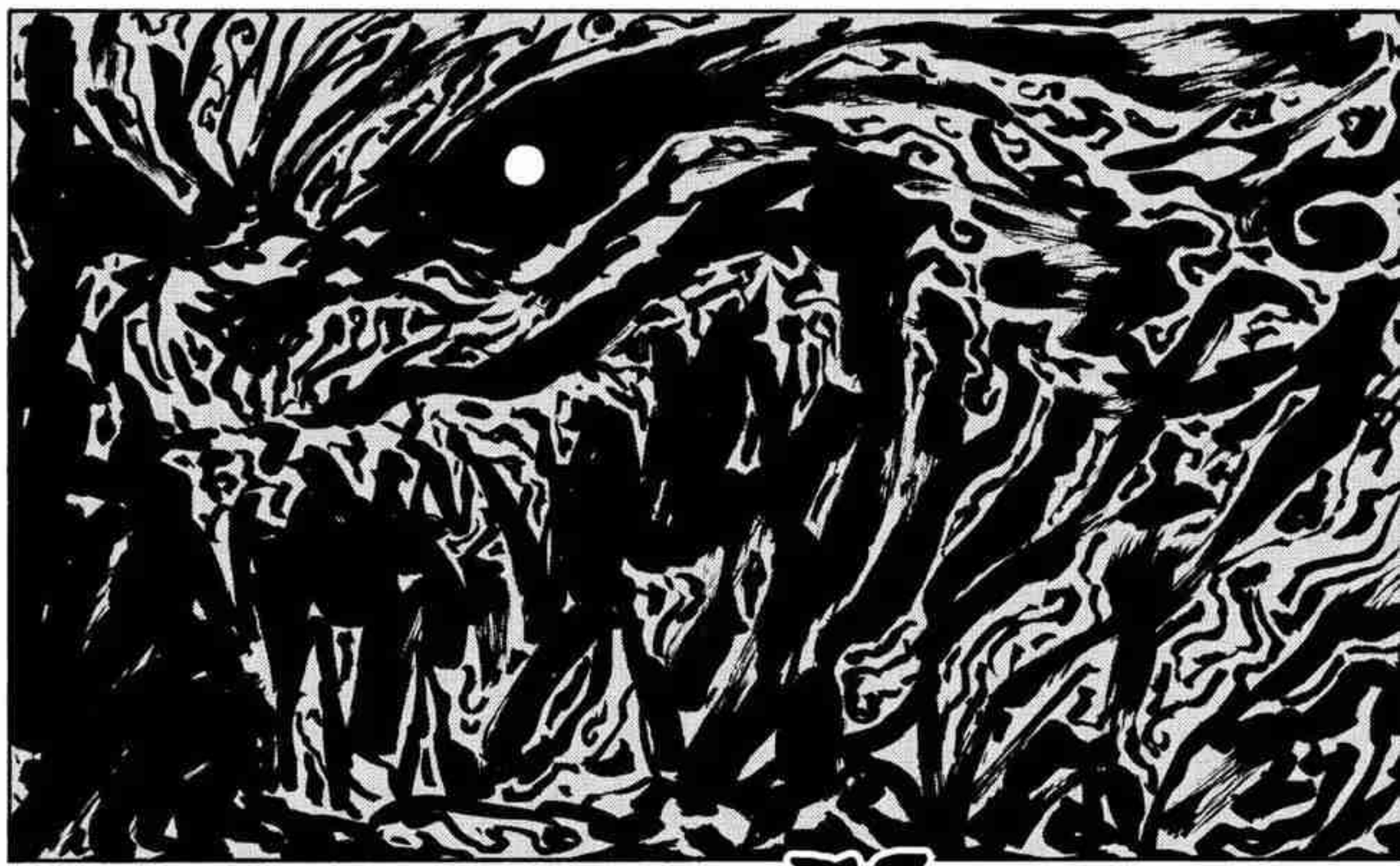








WH... WHAT THE ...?!
GASP



WHAT IS HE...?!
HYAAAH!

TUG TUG

IT CAN'T BE...!!
N...NO WAY...

...DON'T TELL ME... THIS CHAKRA...

...!
風

IT'S NOT POSSIBLE! HIS TENKETSU WERE PRESSED!!

...

WHEN DID HE GAIN THE ABILITY TO ACCESS THE CHAKRA OF THE NINE-TAILED FOX?!
THAT CHAKRA... THERE'S NO MISTAKING IT.

...

HERE I COME!!

SECOND ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION!

Number 104:
The Power to Change...!!

WHIRL
BOOOOSH
IS IT... CHAKRA?!
WHAP
WHAT IS IT?!
...IT'S ENCIR-CLING HIM...
UNH!

THIS POWER... IT'S INCREDIBLE! IT'S SO MUCH STRONGER THAN WHEN I WAS TRAINING...
WOOSH

WOOSH

!!
VWM

...I FEEL IT!!

FWSH
SNAP
SNAP
SNAP

SKIDD

STF
KLAK

HAH!!
FWP
FWP
FWP
ROTA-
TION
!!

GRAB
GRAB

GRR!!
UP
FWING
THOK
THOK
THOK
THOK
HE'S QUICKER THAN BEFORE! WHAT IN THE WORLD IS GOING ON?!

CLUTCH

SLASH

FWNG
FWNG

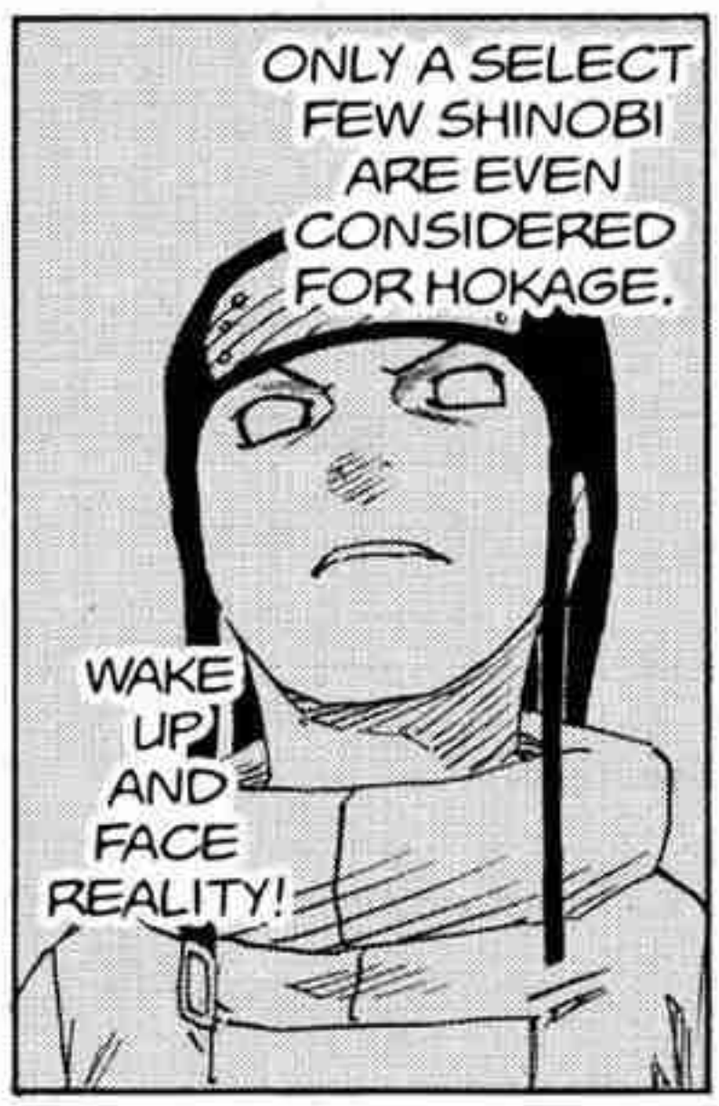
LEAP

DASH

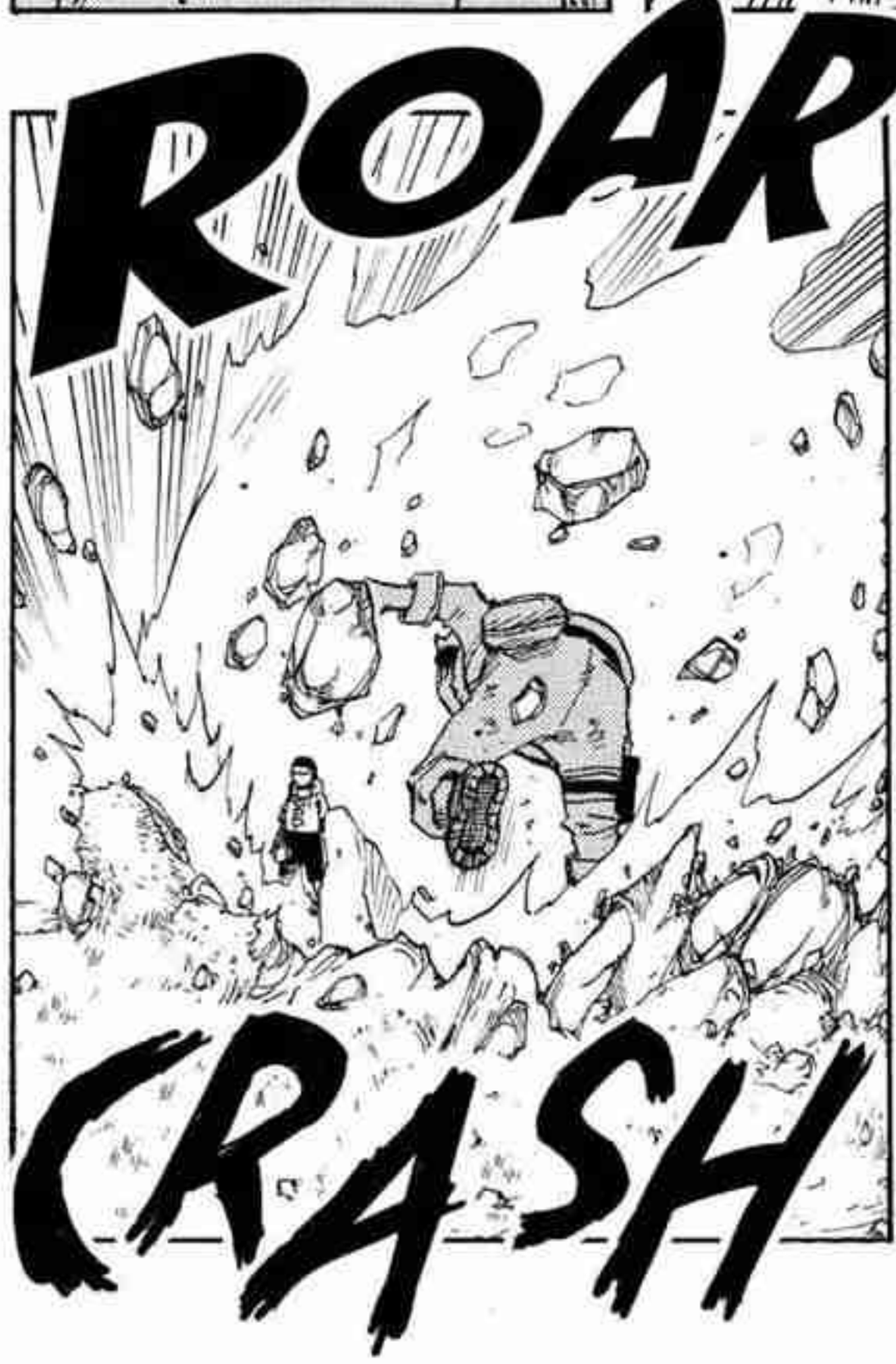
CLA
NG
SKIN
YOU LIKE CLOSE COMBAT, RIGHT?!
YOU...

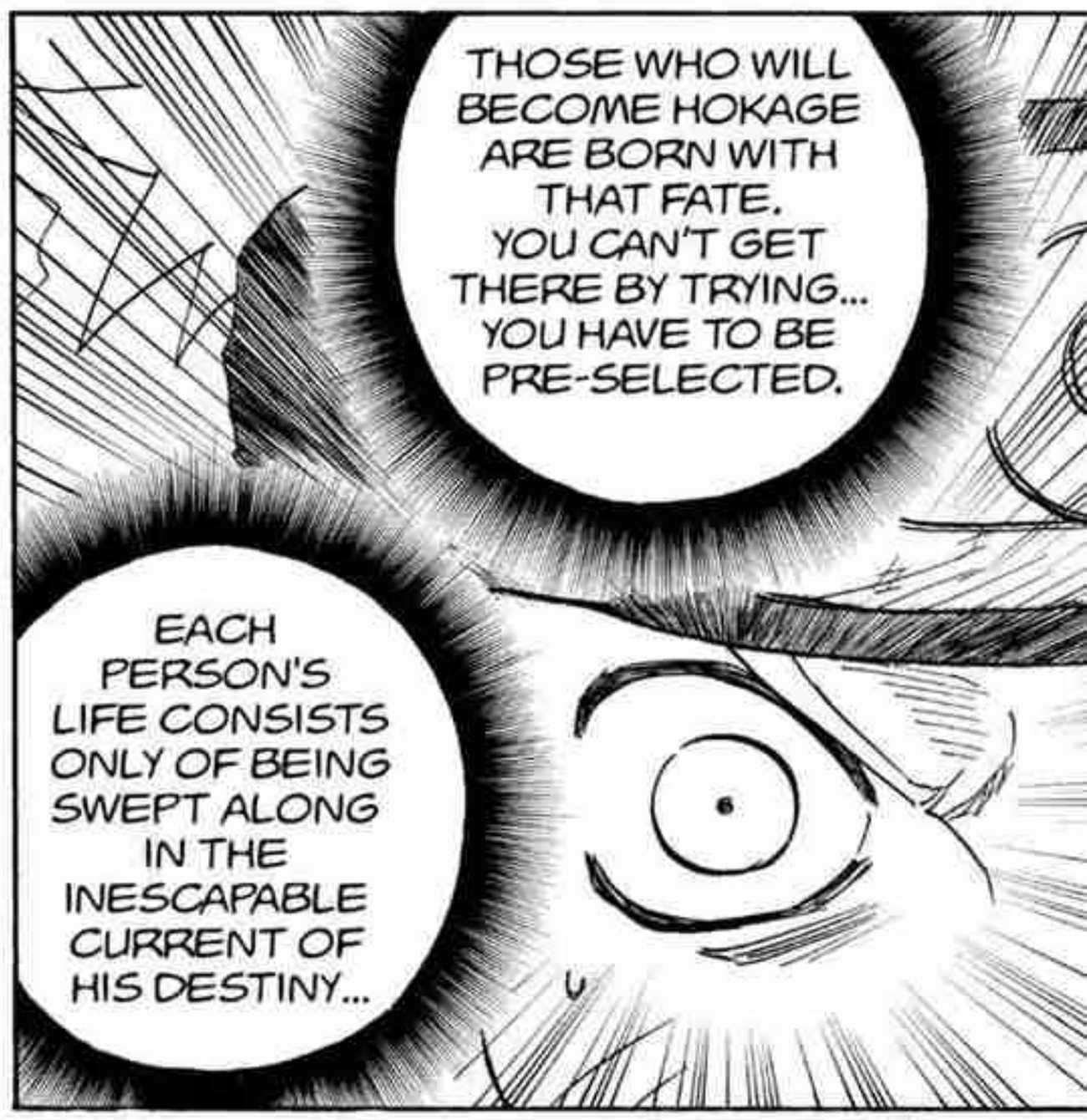
DASH
HYAAH!!

GLARE


ONLY A SELECT FEW SHINOBI ARE EVEN CONSIDERED FOR HOKAGE.
WAKE UP AND FACE REALITY!

...YOU WANT TO BE HOKAGE, HUH?
I DON'T THINK THAT'S GONNA HAPPEN.


ROAR
CRASH


THOSE WHO WILL BECOME HOKAGE ARE BORN WITH THAT FATE. YOU CAN'T GET THERE BY TRYING... YOU HAVE TO BE PRE-SELECTED.
EACH PERSON'S LIFE CONSISTS ONLY OF BEING SWEPT ALONG IN THE INESCAPABLE CURRENT OF HIS DESTINY...

!!
IF YOU THINK IT'S INESCAPABLE, FINE! THEN STOP FIGHTING IT ALREADY!!
LOOK, I MAY NOT UNDERSTAND THE TRAGIC DESTINY OF THE HYUGA CLAN OR WHATEVER, BUT...
!
NO! THE ROTATION...
...I'LL CHANGE THE HYUGA CLAN!
WHAM
WHEN I BECOME HOKAGE...

BOOM

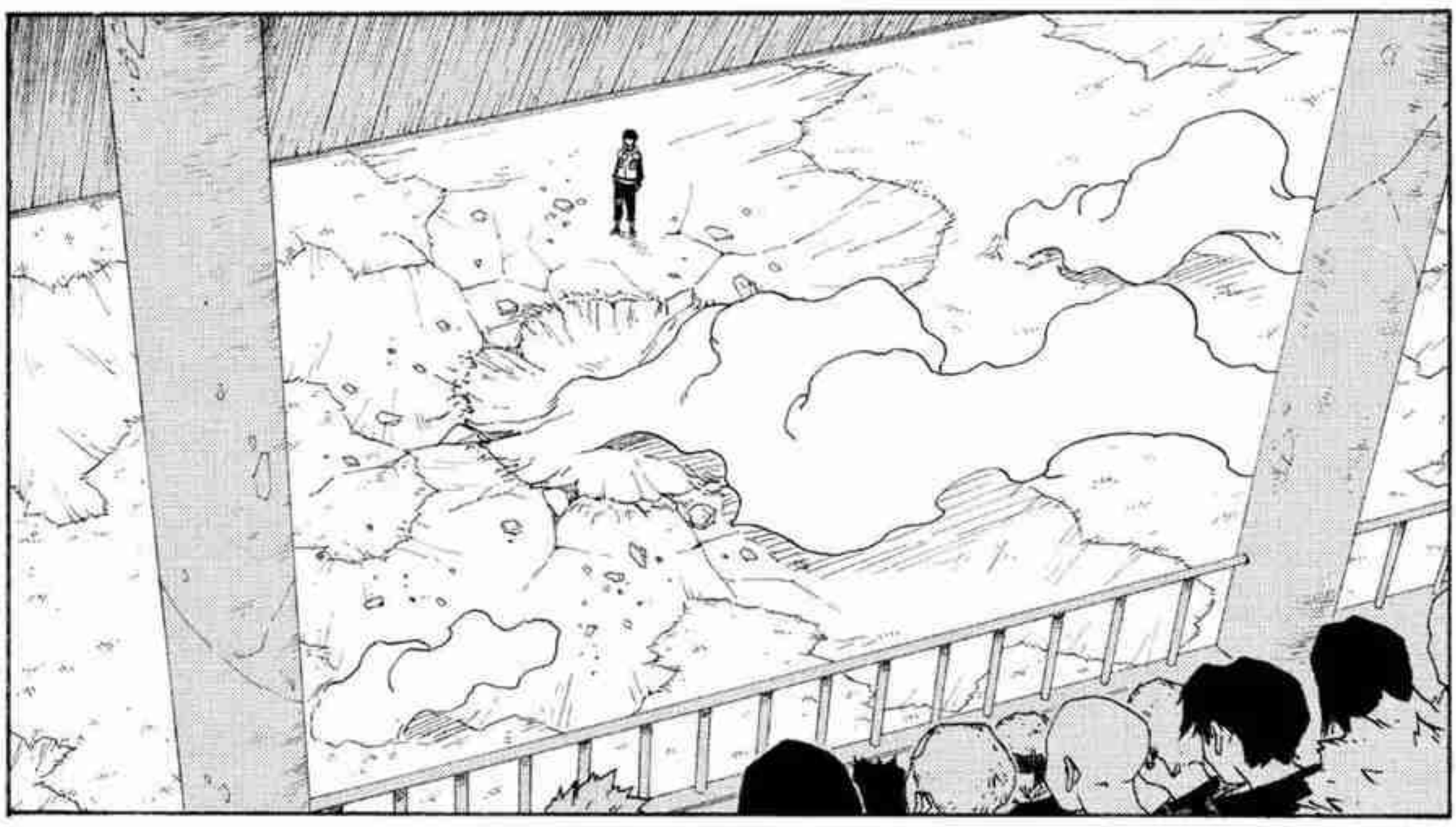
BO OF

KA

BO OF

CRASH

SMASH

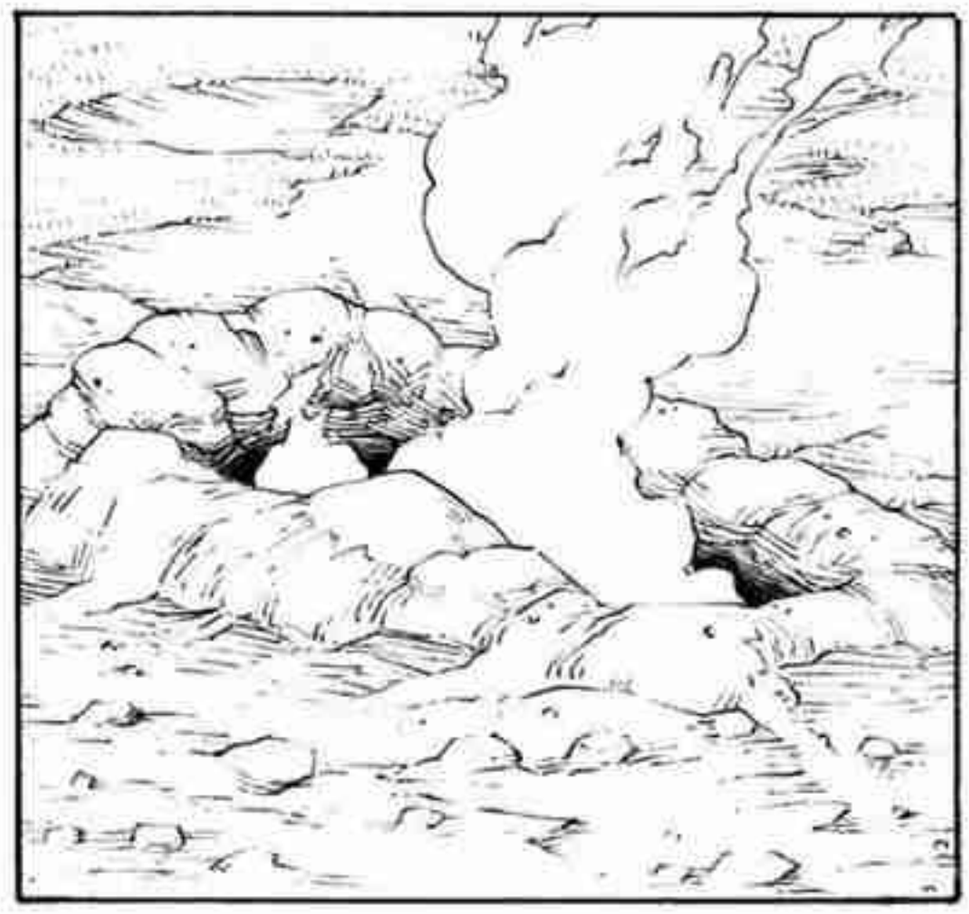


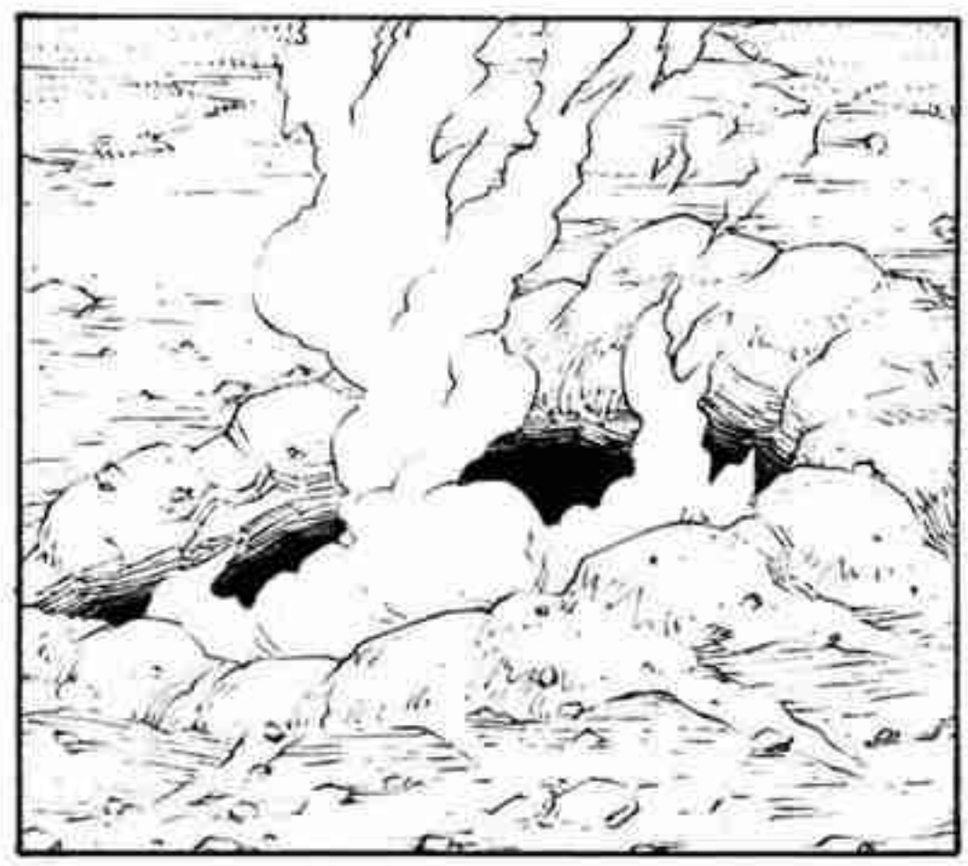
THE HYUGA KID... HE'S PROBABLY...
...WHAT AMAZING CHAKRA...! THAT BOY'S STRENGTH... IT'S CRAZY!

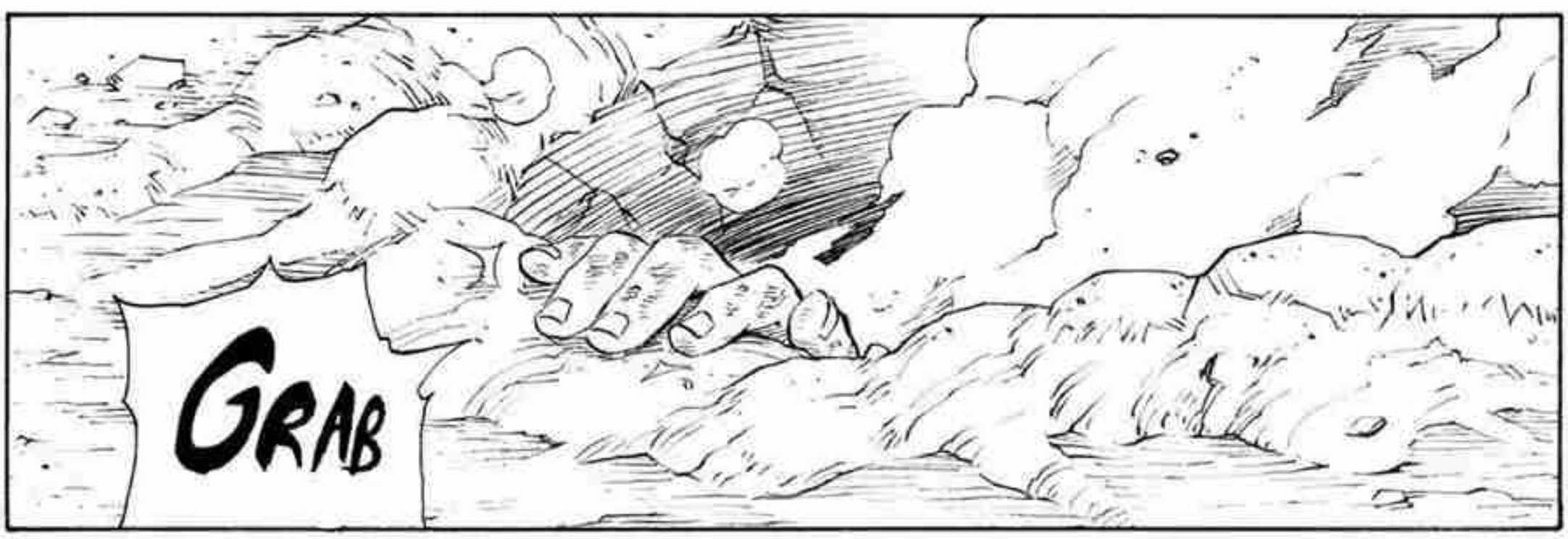
...

HM!

HEY! WHICH ONE'S NARUTO?!
HOW WOULD I KNOW?!





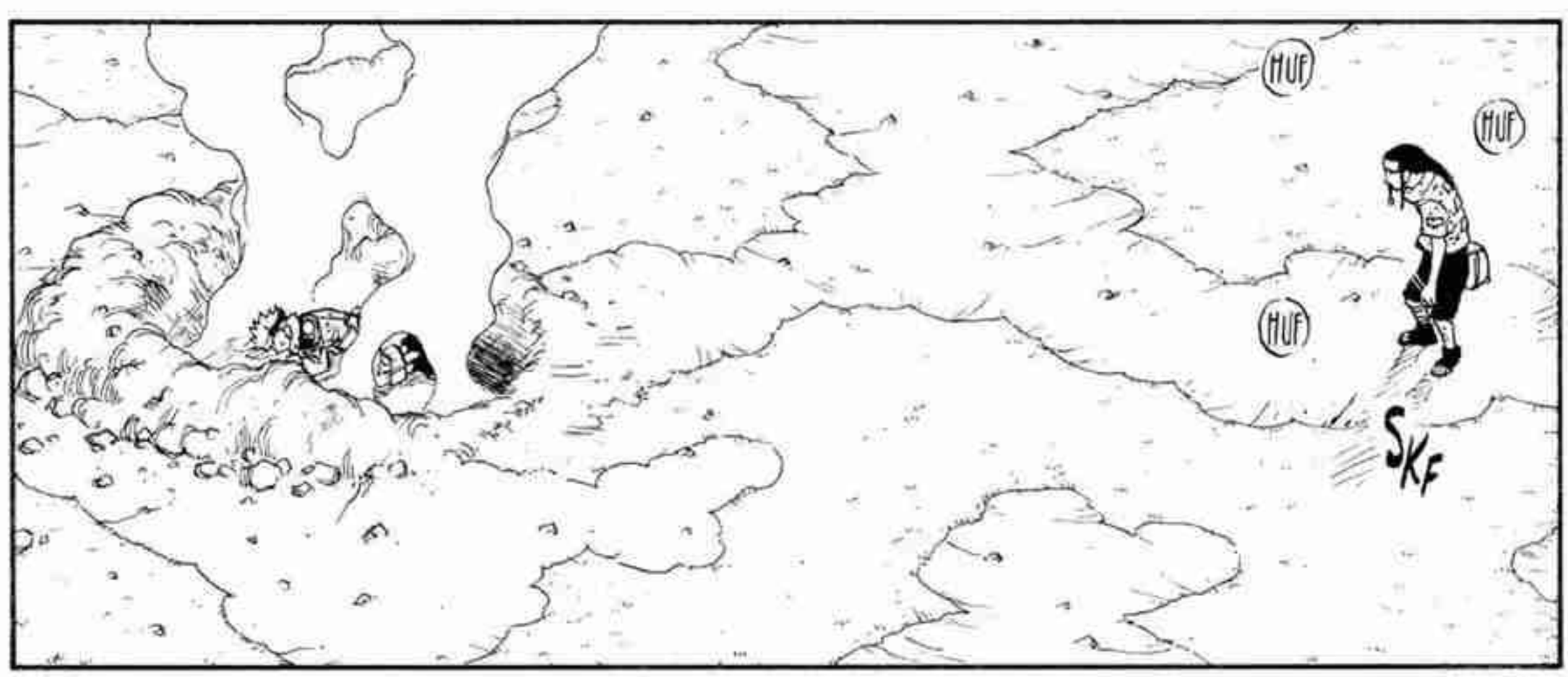

GRAB

GULP

PHEW...

HUF
SKF
HUF
HUF

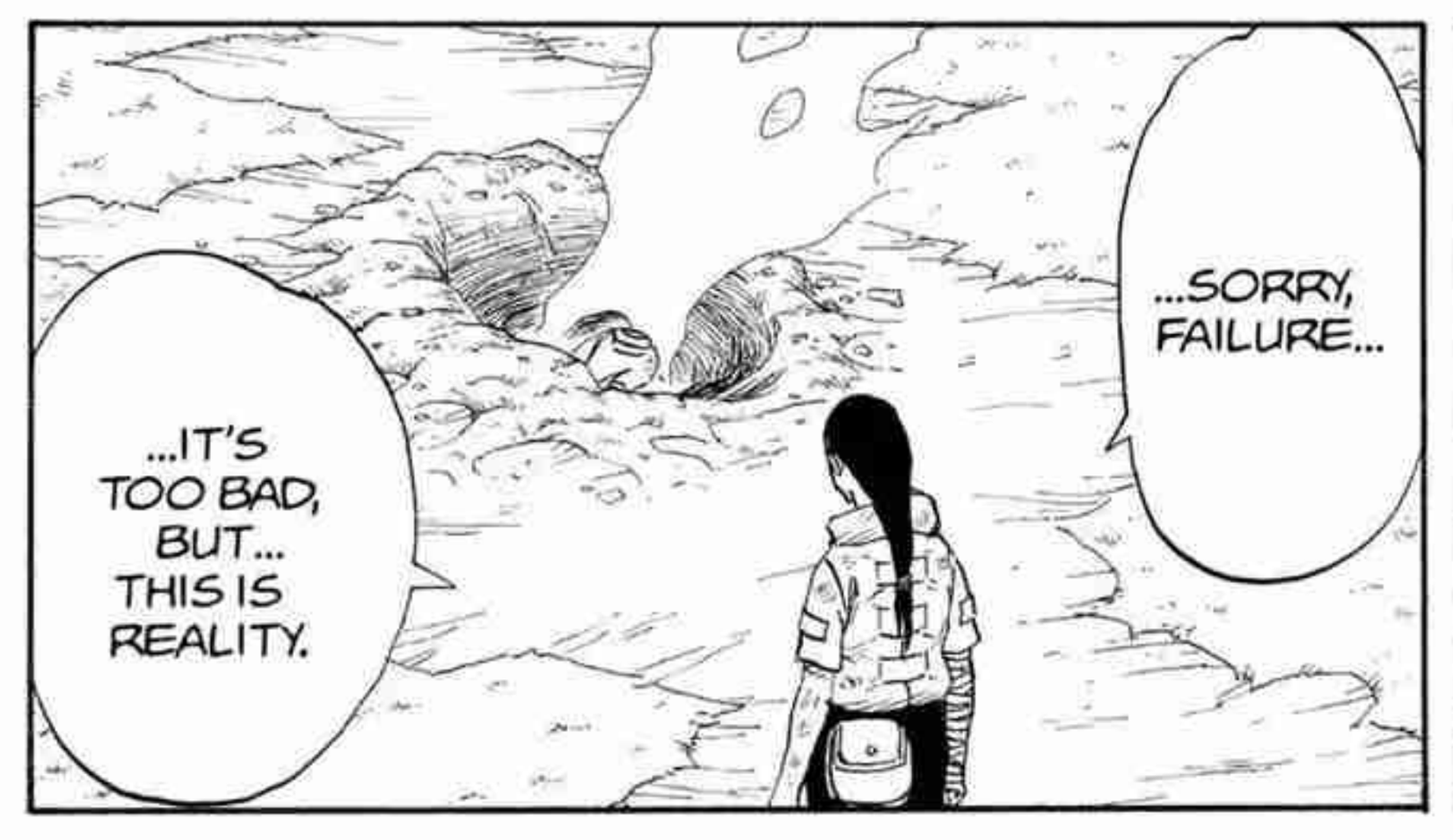
KOFF KOFF
SKF

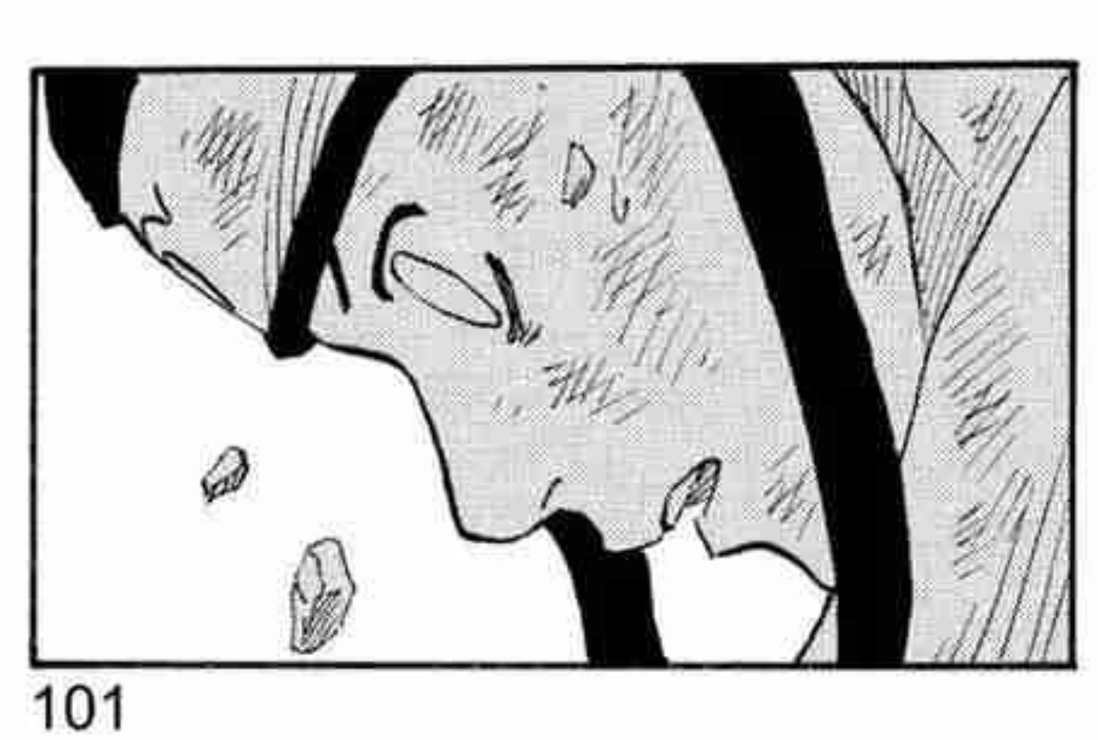

HUF
HUF
HUF
SKF

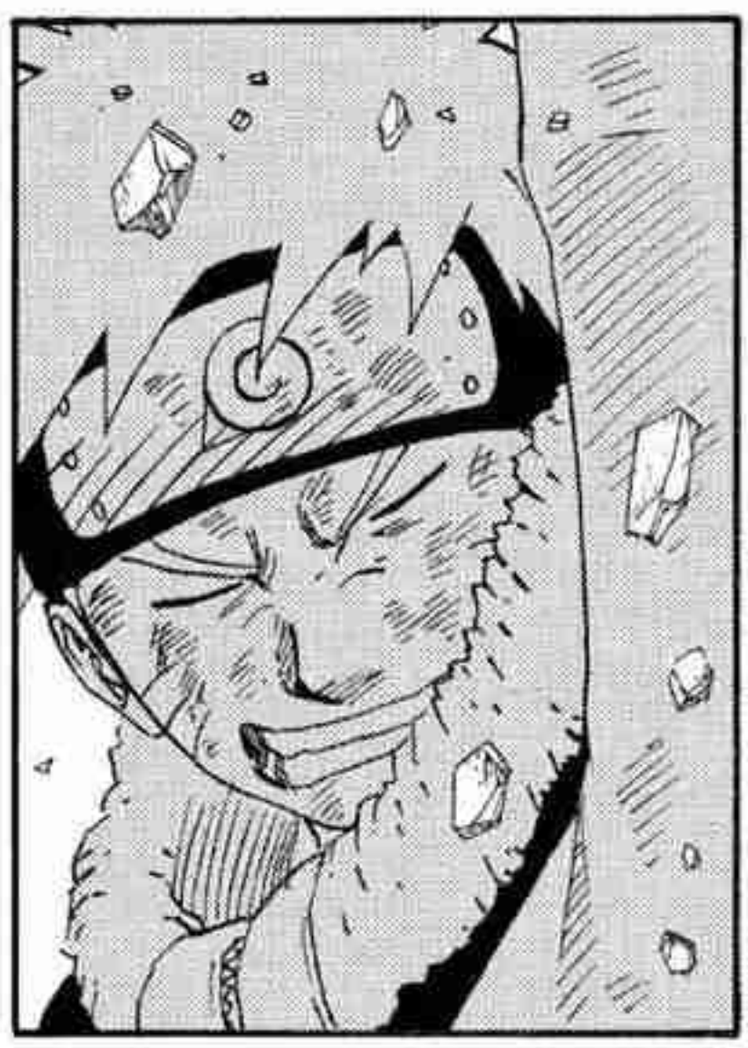
NO GENIN COULD DEFEAT NEJI...
...BUT IT'S AMAZING THAT NARUTO HAS BEEN ABLE TO PUSH NEJI THIS FAR...!

WHEN NEJI DOES HIS ROTATION, HE SPINS AROUND IN A CIRCLE, BLOCKING AND REPELLING HIS OPPONENT'S CHAKRA!
NARUTO CHARGED STRAIGHT AT NEJI... IT LOOKS LIKE HE SUSTAINED PRETTY SEVERE DAMAGE...

HUF
HUF
HUF
...


...IT'S TOO BAD, BUT... THIS IS REALITY.
...SORRY, FAILURE...





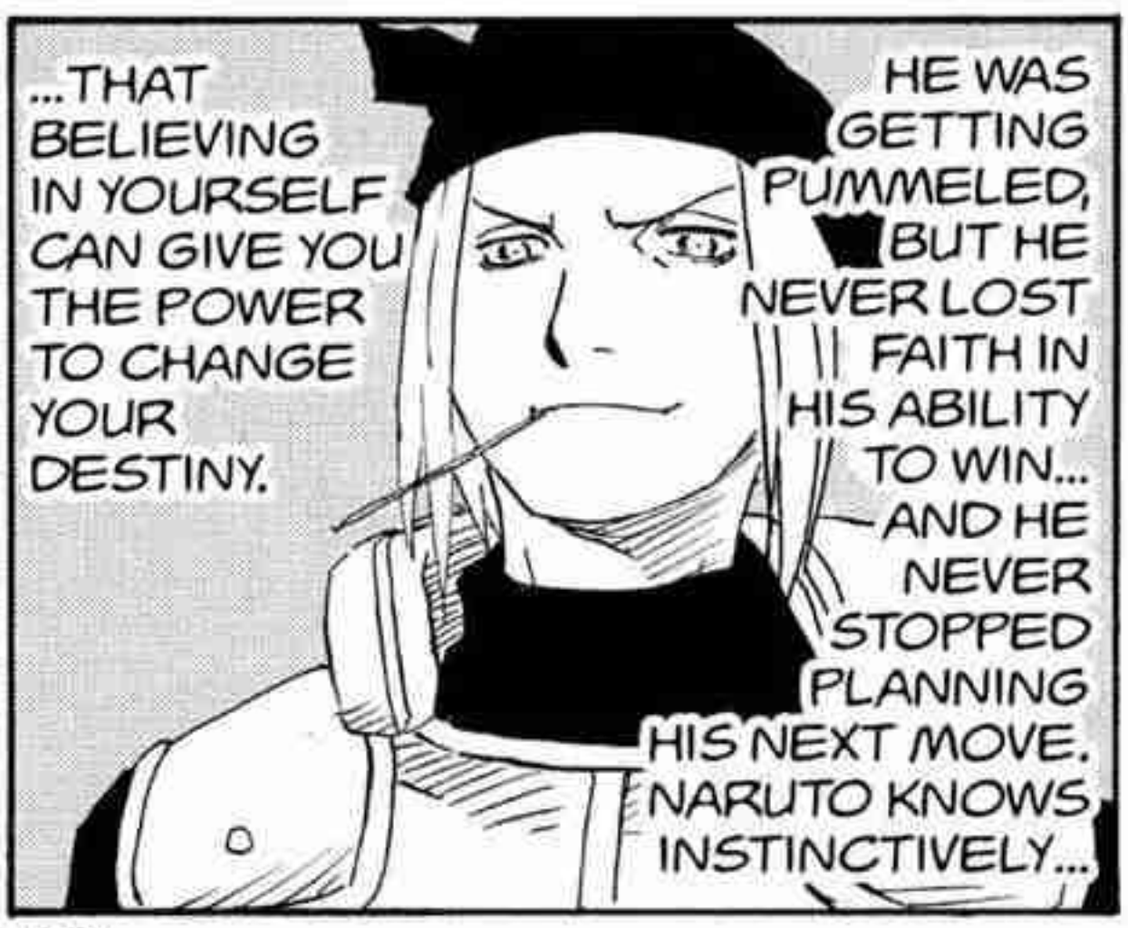
POW

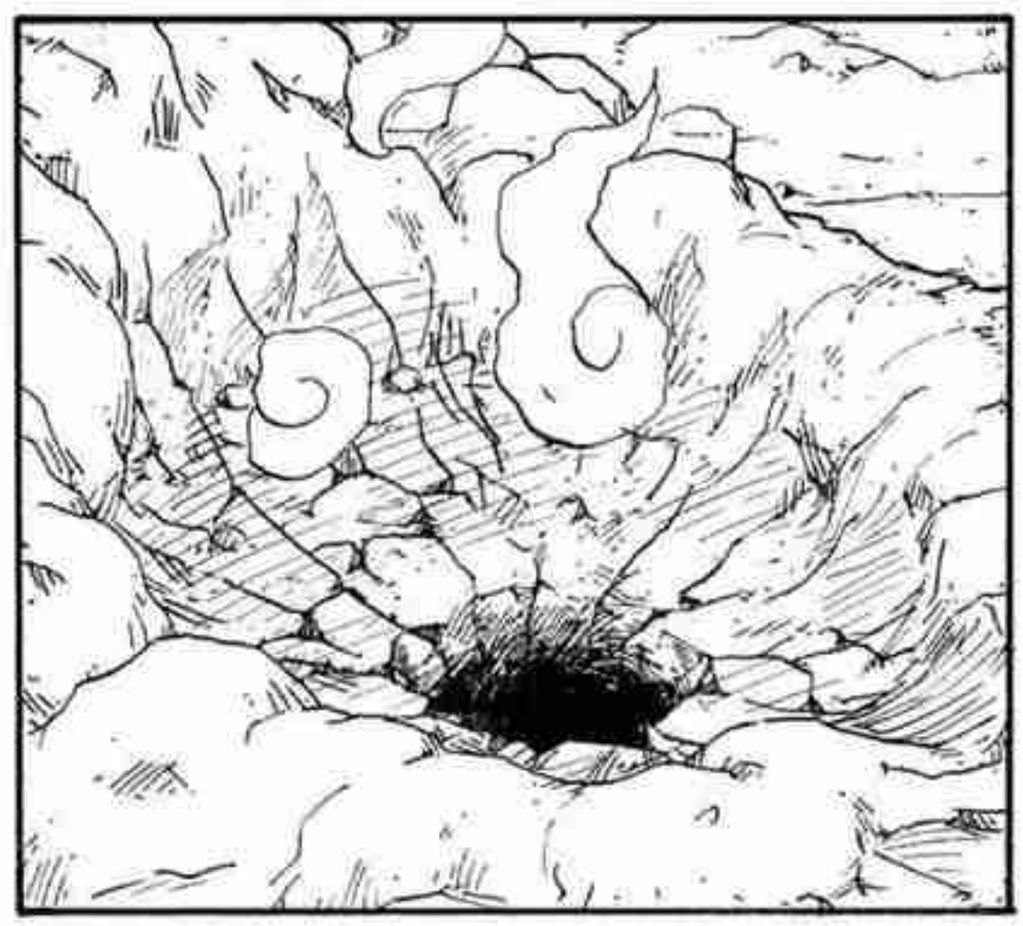
SKIDD

POOF

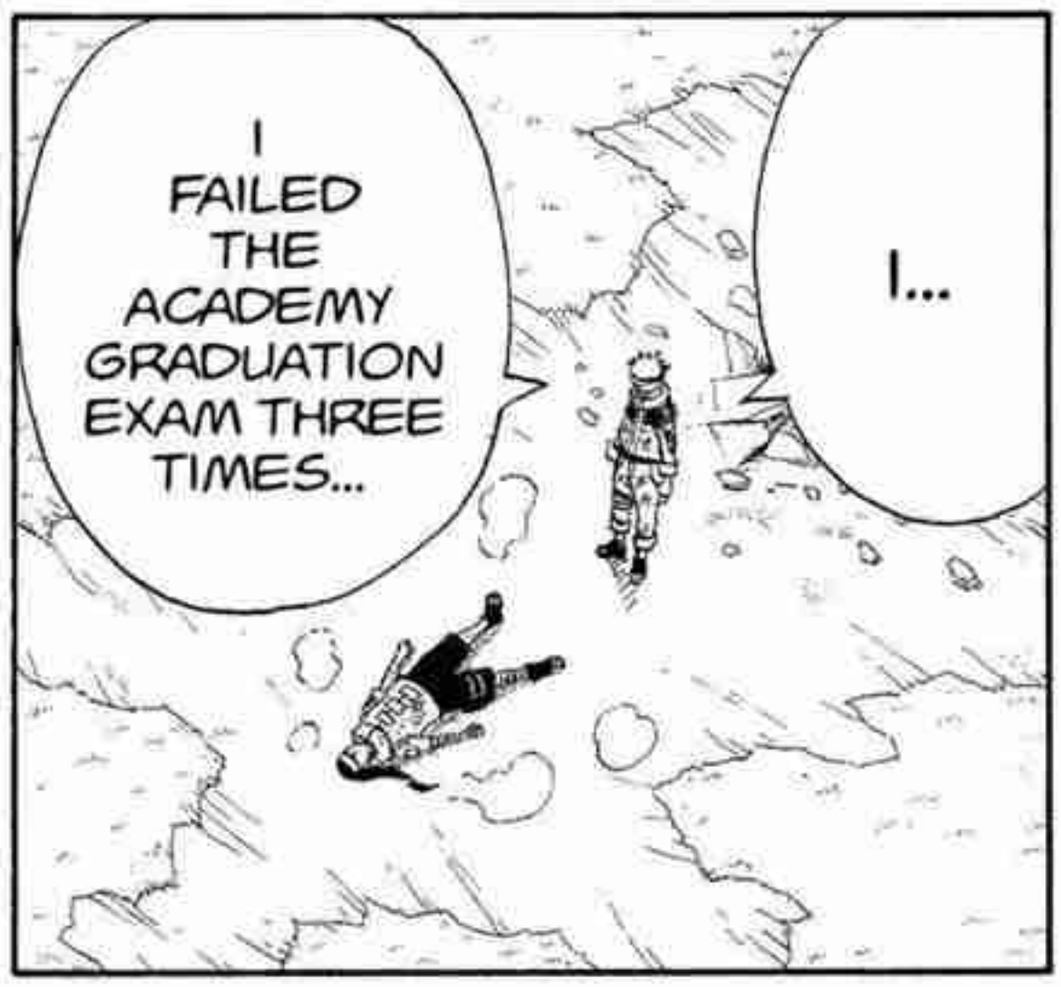
UNH... MY BODY...

HUF
HUF

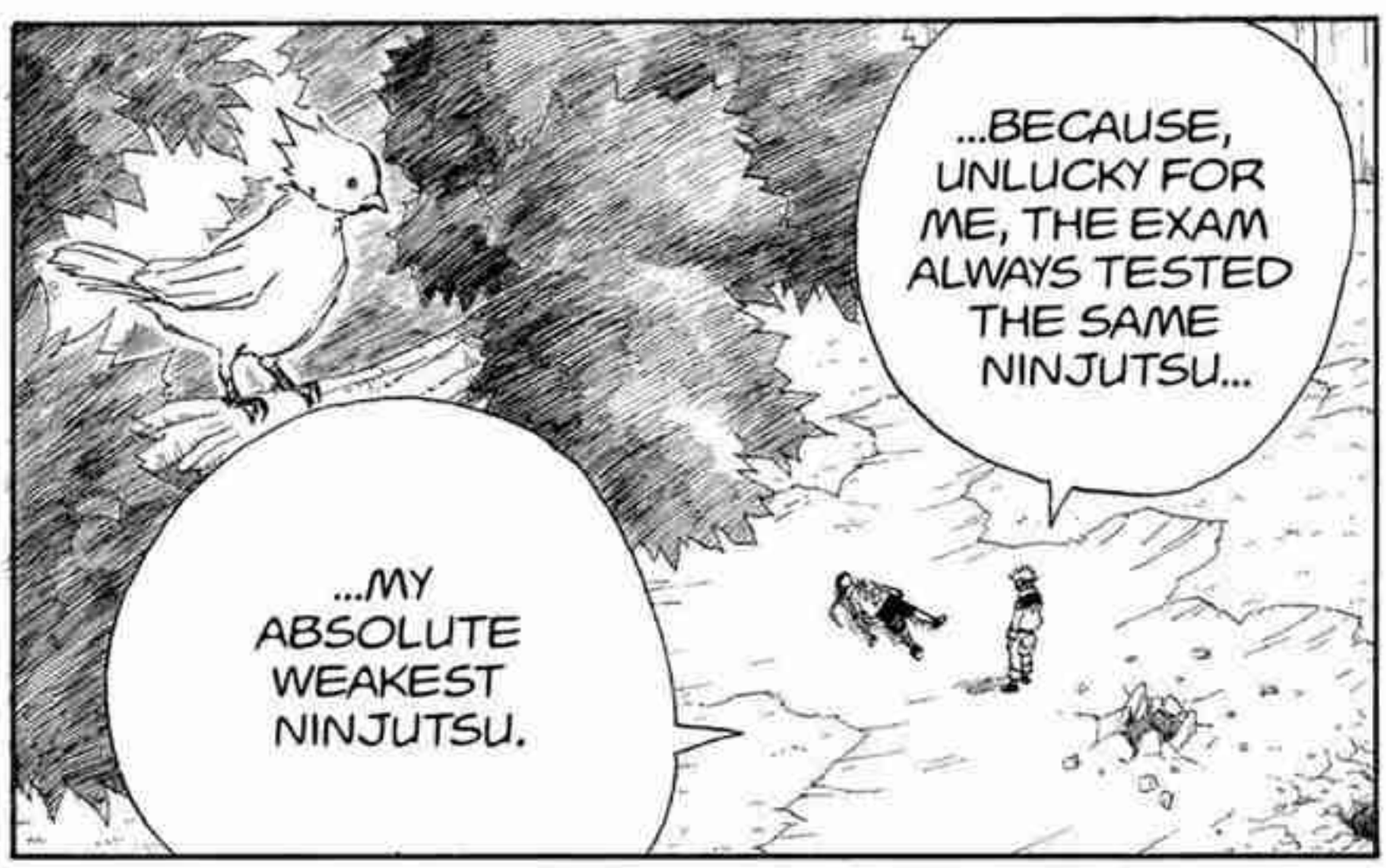

...THAT BELIEVING IN YOURSELF CAN GIVE YOU THE POWER TO CHANGE YOUR DESTINY.
HE WAS GETTING PUMMELED, BUT HE NEVER LOST FAITH IN HIS ABILITY TO WIN... AND HE NEVER STOPPED PLANNING HIS NEXT MOVE. NARUTO KNOWS INSTINCTIVELY...



HUF
HUF
...


I FAILED THE ACADEMY GRADUATION EXAM THREE TIMES...
I...

UGH... IN THE MIDDLE OF ALL OF THAT, YOU MANAGED TO CREATE A SHADOW DOPPELGANGER?
YOUR SIGNATURE NINJUTSU... THAT WAS CARELESS OF ME...
HUF


...BECAUSE, UNLUCKY FOR ME, THE EXAM ALWAYS TESTED THE SAME NINJUTSU...
...MY ABSOLUTE WEAKEST NINJUTSU.

...?

...

...

...

...!

...!!

...WAS BUNSHIN NO JUTSU... THE ART OF THE DOPPEL-GANGER.
AND MY WEAKEST NINJUTSU...

...YOU'RE NOT A "FAILURE."
'CAUSE... UNLIKE ME...

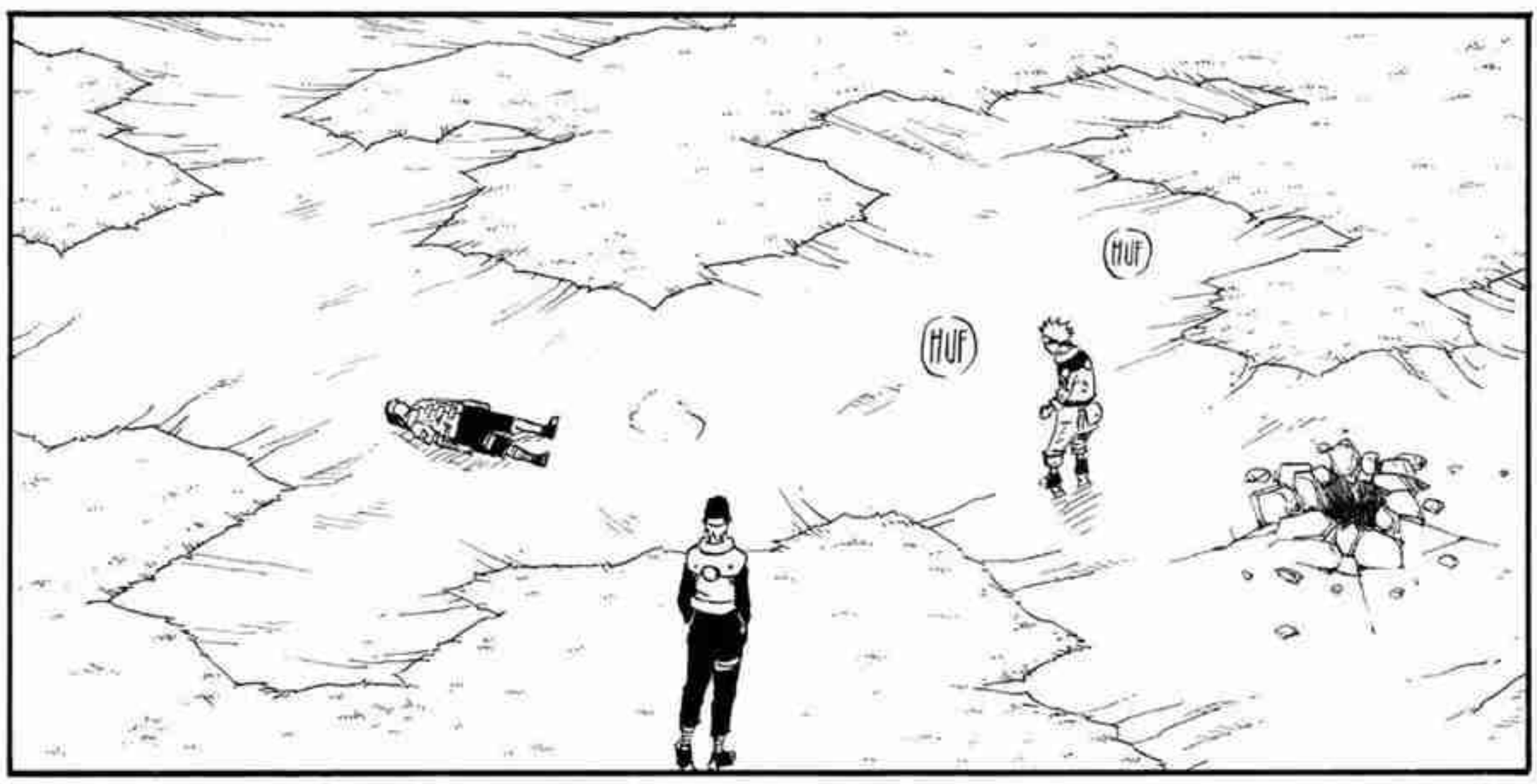
YOU SHOULDN'T WHINE ABOUT SUCH TRIVIAL STUFF!
SO SHUT UP ABOUT "DESTINY" AND "INESCA-PABLE FATE"...

FWAP

...UZUMAKI NARUTO!!
FWAP
THE WINNER IS...

HM...

Number 105: The Great Flight!!



HEH...THE FOX BOY PUT ON QUITE A PERFOR-MANCE! I'M IMPRESSED...!
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP

CLAP CLAP CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP

NARUTO WON!
YES!

CLAP CLAP
(HUF)
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
(HUF)
!

CLAP CLAP CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
...
HA HA...

YEAH!
YEAH!
WHAT A GREAT BATTLE!!
CLAP CLAP
GOOD JOB!
CLAP CLAP
CLAP CLAP CLAP
YEAH!
THAT WAS AMAZING!
CLAP CLAP

CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP

HEH HEH...

FWEET FWEET

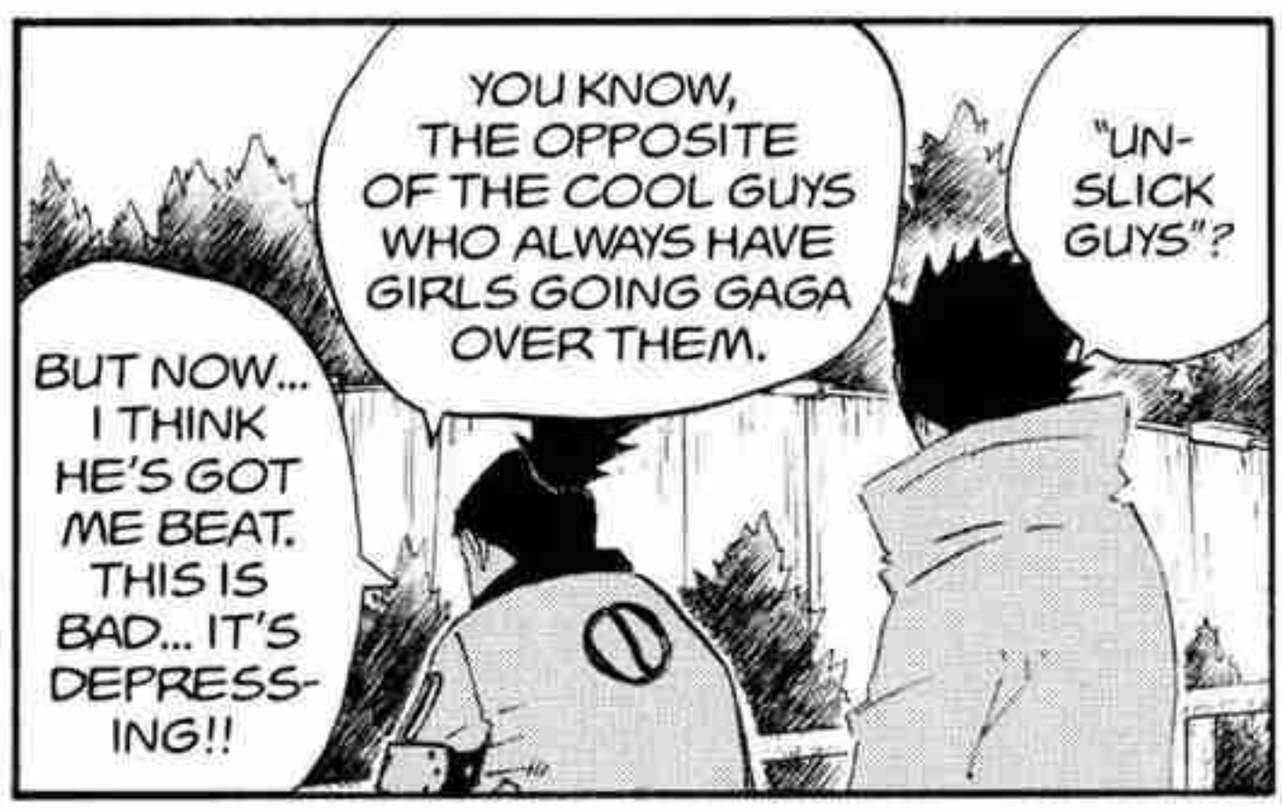
CLAP CLAP

WOW! HE ACTUALLY WON!
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT... I ALWAYS THOUGHT THAT NARUTO WAS ONE OF THE UNSLICK GUYS... JUST LIKE ME...

CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
THAT'S A PRETTY IMPRES-SIVE FEAT...!
WATCHING NARUTO FIGHT MAKES ME WANT TO WORK EVEN HARDER...

UH... NOTH-ING...
OH!
WHAT'S WRONG, SAKURA?

YEAH... I THINK EVERYONE HERE FROM KONOHA IS IN SHOCK.
HE WAS ABLE TO DRAW ON THE FOX'S CHAKRA WITHOUT LOSING HIMSELF...!


BUT NOW... I THINK HE'S GOT ME BEAT. THIS IS BAD... IT'S DEPRESS-ING!!
YOU KNOW, THE OPPOSITE OF THE COOL GUYS WHO ALWAYS HAVE GIRLS GOING GAGA OVER THEM.
"UN-SLICK GUYS"?

...
風

...HEH!

WHEN IN THE WORLD DID HE GET TO THAT STAGE? DID KAKASHI TEACH HIM THAT?
NARUTO WAS ABLE TO USE THE POWER OF THE NINE-TAILED FOX... AND NOT JUST USE IT, BUT CHANNEL AND CONTROL IT STABLY...
火

DID SHE COME TO WATCH US LIKE I TOLD HER?
I WONDER WHERE HINATA IS...

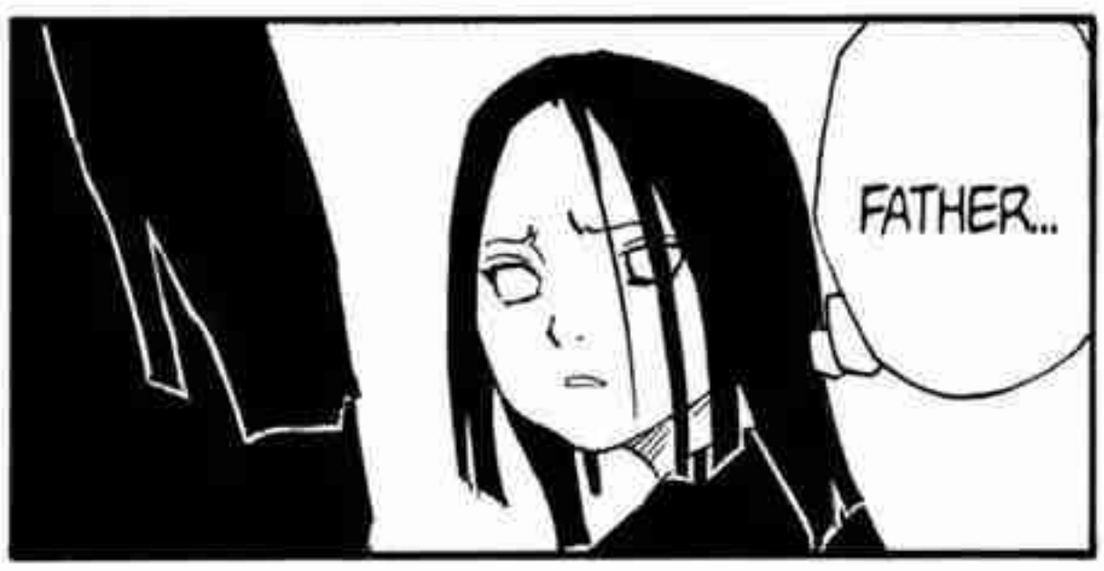
...

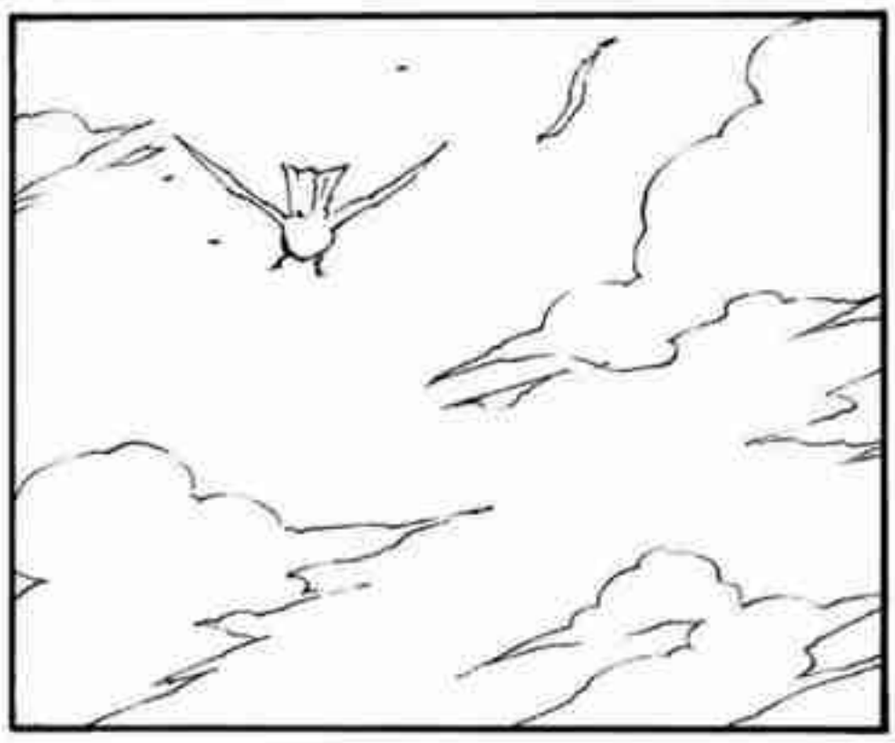
...WILL TRY TO OPEN THE CAGE DOOR WITH ITS BEAK...
...HMPH... EVEN A CAGED BIRD, WHEN IT SMARTENS UP...

...

...NEVER GIVING UP ITS DREAM...
...TO FLY FREE AGAIN.

BUT THIS TIME, YOU GOT BEAT.





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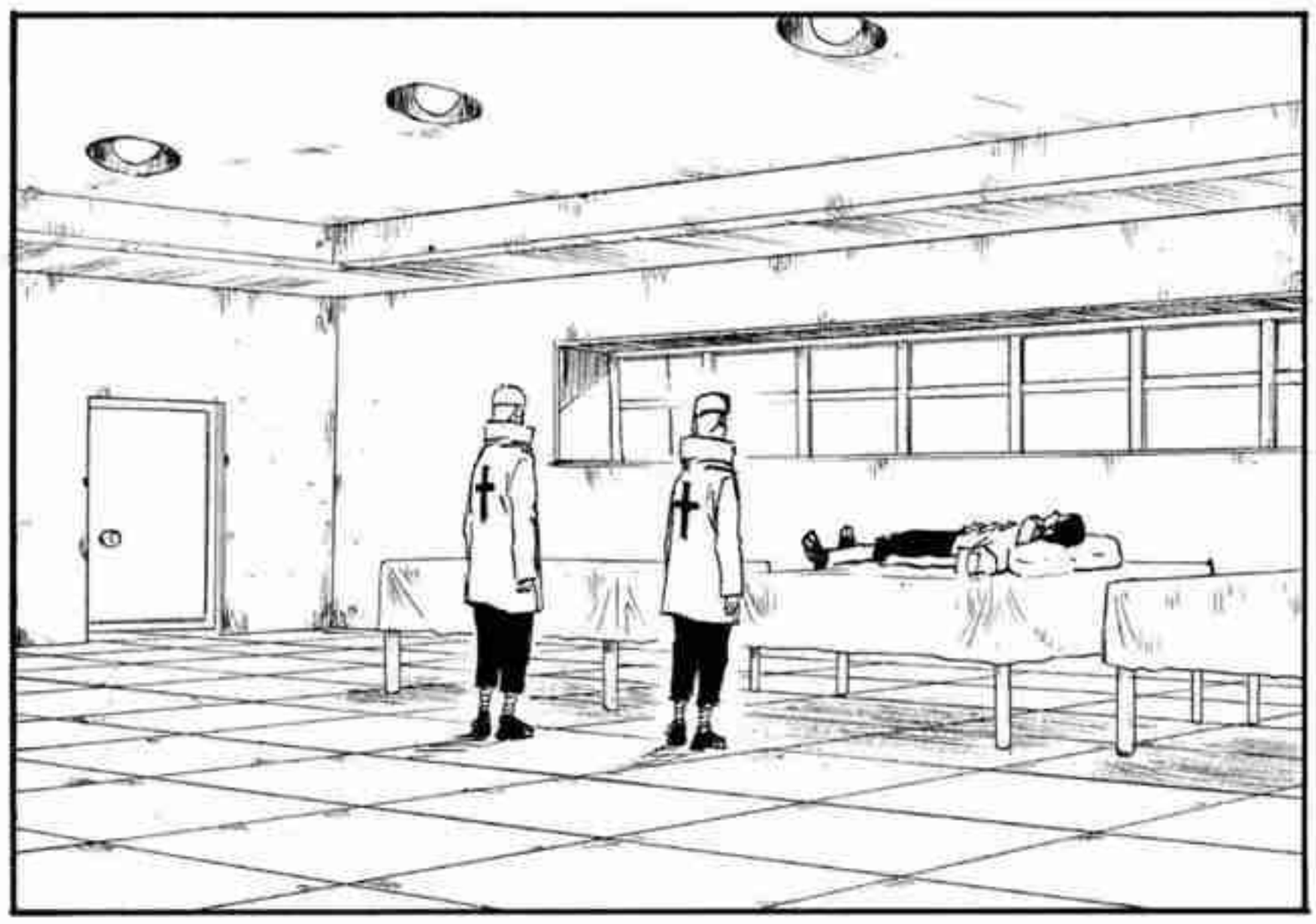


THOSE WHO WILL BECOME HOKAGE ARE BORN WITH THAT FATE.
WELL... SO WHAT?!

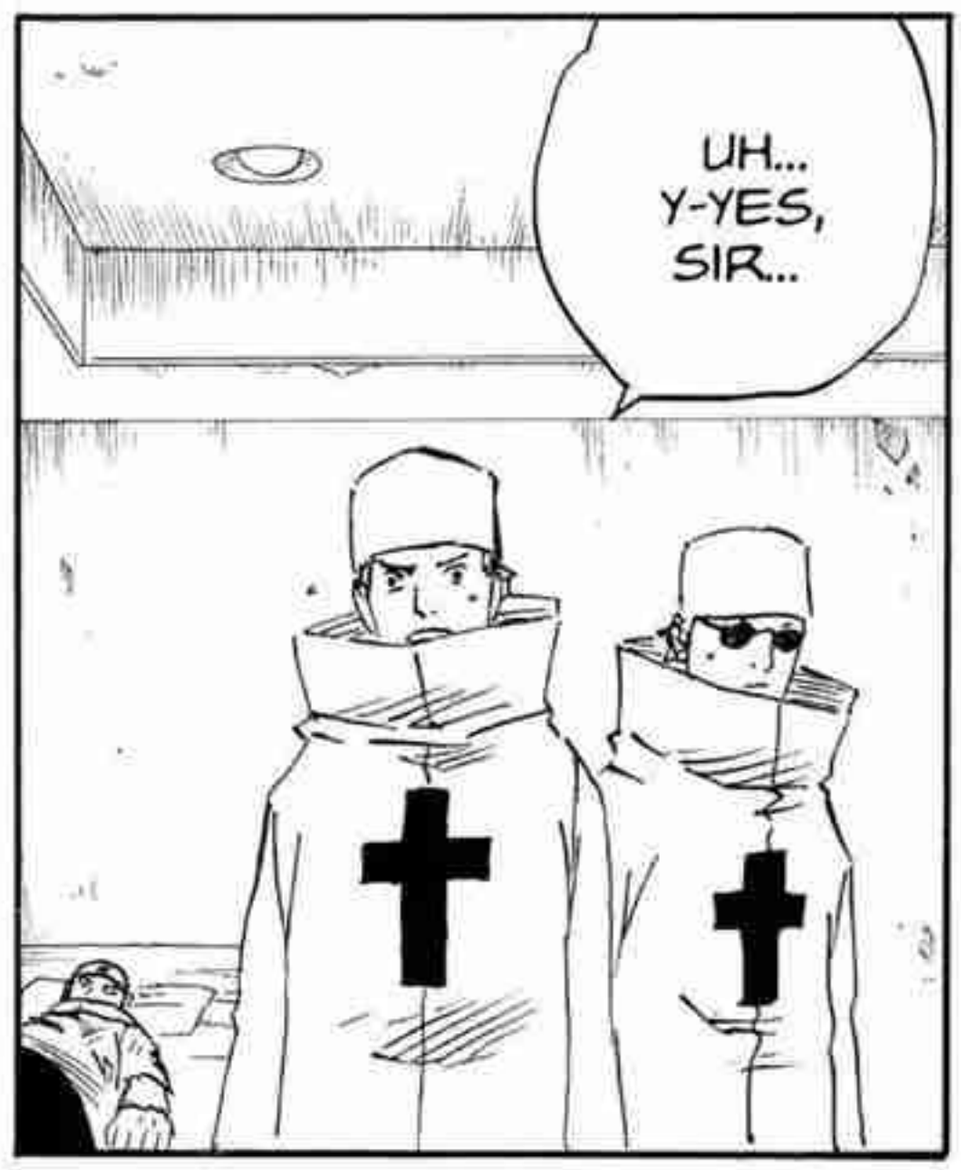
WHY DO YOU KEEP TRYING SO HARD TO DEFY YOUR DESTINY?!
BECAUSE SOMEBODY TOLD ME I WAS A FAILURE!

YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY ONE WHO'S "SPECIAL," YOU KNOW!

!

LORD HYUGA!
!

...
CLACK


UH... Y-YES, SIR...

COULD I SPEAK WITH NEJI PRIVATELY?
FORGIVE ME...

...

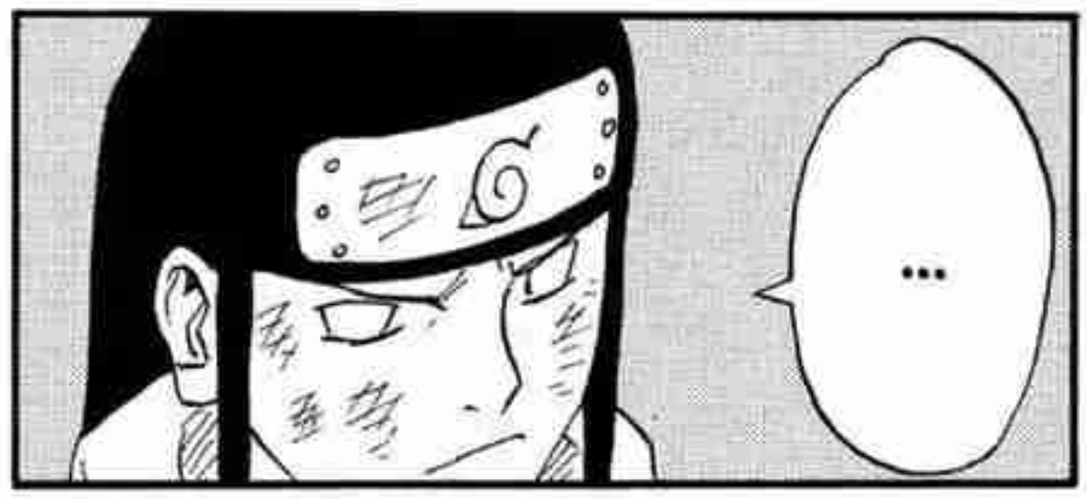
CLACK

...WHAT IS IT, SIR?

UNH...
SHF

...THE REAL TRUTH...?
...!

...TO TELL YOU THE REAL TRUTH ABOUT THAT DAY.
I CAME HERE...


...

...

...I FULLY INTENDED TO DIE.
...THAT DAY...

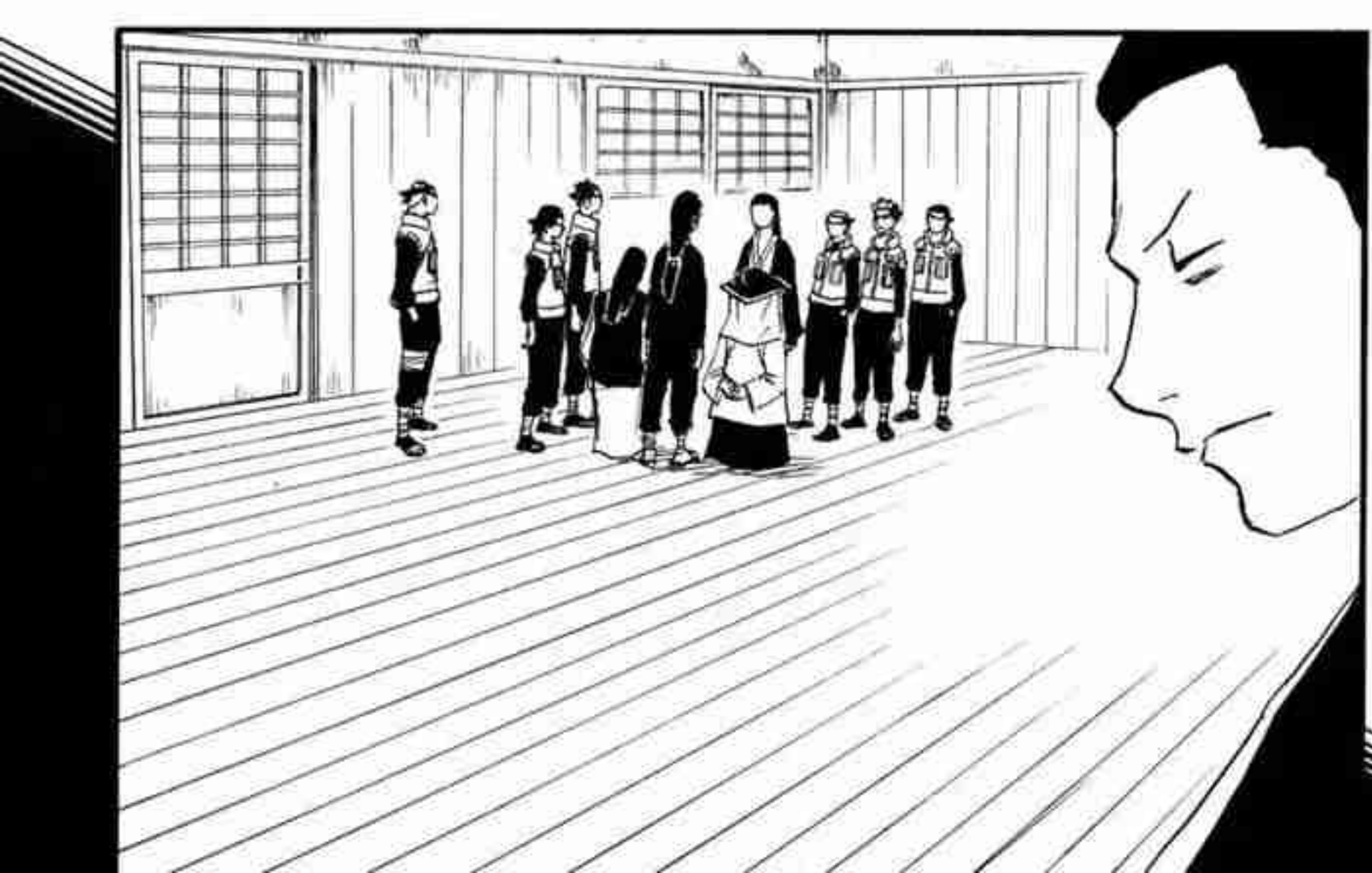
GRR

!

THAT DAY, MY FATHER WAS MURDERED TO ACT AS YOUR BODY DOUBLE!

WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?!

WHAT...?!



READ
THIS
WAY

THE KEKKEI GENKAI OF THE HYUGA CLAN IS A VITAL ASSET OF THE VILLAGE.
HIASHI... DO NOT BE SO HASTY...
AND YOUR PRIMARY DUTY AS HEAD OF THE MAIN BRANCH IS TO PROTECT IT, NOW AND FOREVER.

MMM...
THERE IS NO OTHER CHOICE...
SACRIFICING MY LIFE WILL SAVE THE ENTIRE VILLAGE.

...BUT THAT IS WHY WE HAVE THE CADET BRANCH.

...!

...IF IT DRAGS THE VILLAGE INTO INTRACTABLE WAR?
BUT WHAT PURPOSE DOES THAT DUTY SERVE...
OF COURSE...

OUR ONLY HOPE IS TO HAND OVER HIZASHI'S CORPSE AS YOUR BODY DOUBLE.
...

...

HIZASHI HAS ALREADY CONSENTED TO IT...

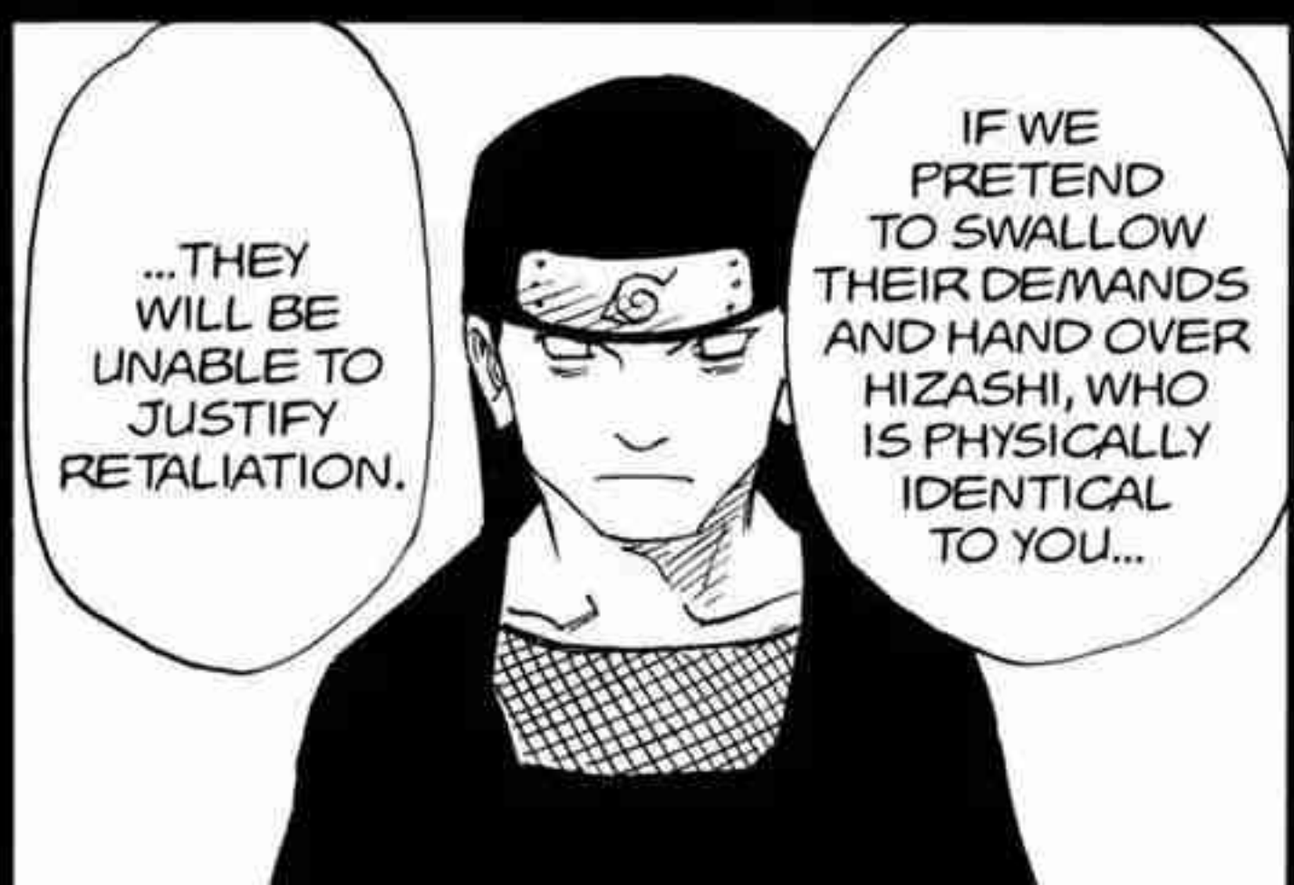
!

WITH HIZASHI, THAT KNOWLEDGE WILL BE SEALED INACCESSIBLY UPON HIS DEATH...
BUT... WHAT THEY WANT IS THE SECRET OF THE BYAKUGAN...!

...

...

..."GIVE US HYUGA HIASHI'S CORPSE."
HMPH... THAT MAY BE THEIR TRUE AIM, BUT THE PRECISE WORDING OF THEIR DEMAND WAS SIMPLY...


...THEY WILL BE UNABLE TO JUSTIFY RETALIATION.
IF WE PRETEND TO SWALLOW THEIR DEMANDS AND HAND OVER HIZASHI, WHO IS PHYSICALLY IDENTICAL TO YOU...

I DON'T THINK THE LAND OF CLOUDS WILL SETTLE FOR THAT!

READ THIS WAY
BUT...
...
...
...AND THE FATE OF ALL THOSE WHO ARE BORN INTO THE HYUGA CLAN.
THAT IS THE DESTINY OF THE MAIN BRANCH...
FOR THE SAKE OF THE FAMILY, YOU MUST POSSESS A HEART OF IRON... EVEN TOWARD YOUR OWN BROTHER!
HIASHI... THE TIME HAS COME. EVERY PREVIOUS CLAN HEAD HAS MADE PAINFUL SACRIFICES TO PROTECT THE HYUGA BLOOD...
...
UNH...
...
I... I'VE NEVER FACED SOMETHING THIS HUGE BEFORE! IT'S NOT THAT EASY...
...!
...WHERE IS THE STRONG, AGGRESSIVE LORD HIASHI I KNOW SO WELL?

!!

!

WHA

PLEASE... LET ME DO THIS.

!

!

SLUMP

NO... HIZASHI, YOU...!

YOU MISUNDER-STAND.

...WHY CHOOSE DEATH?

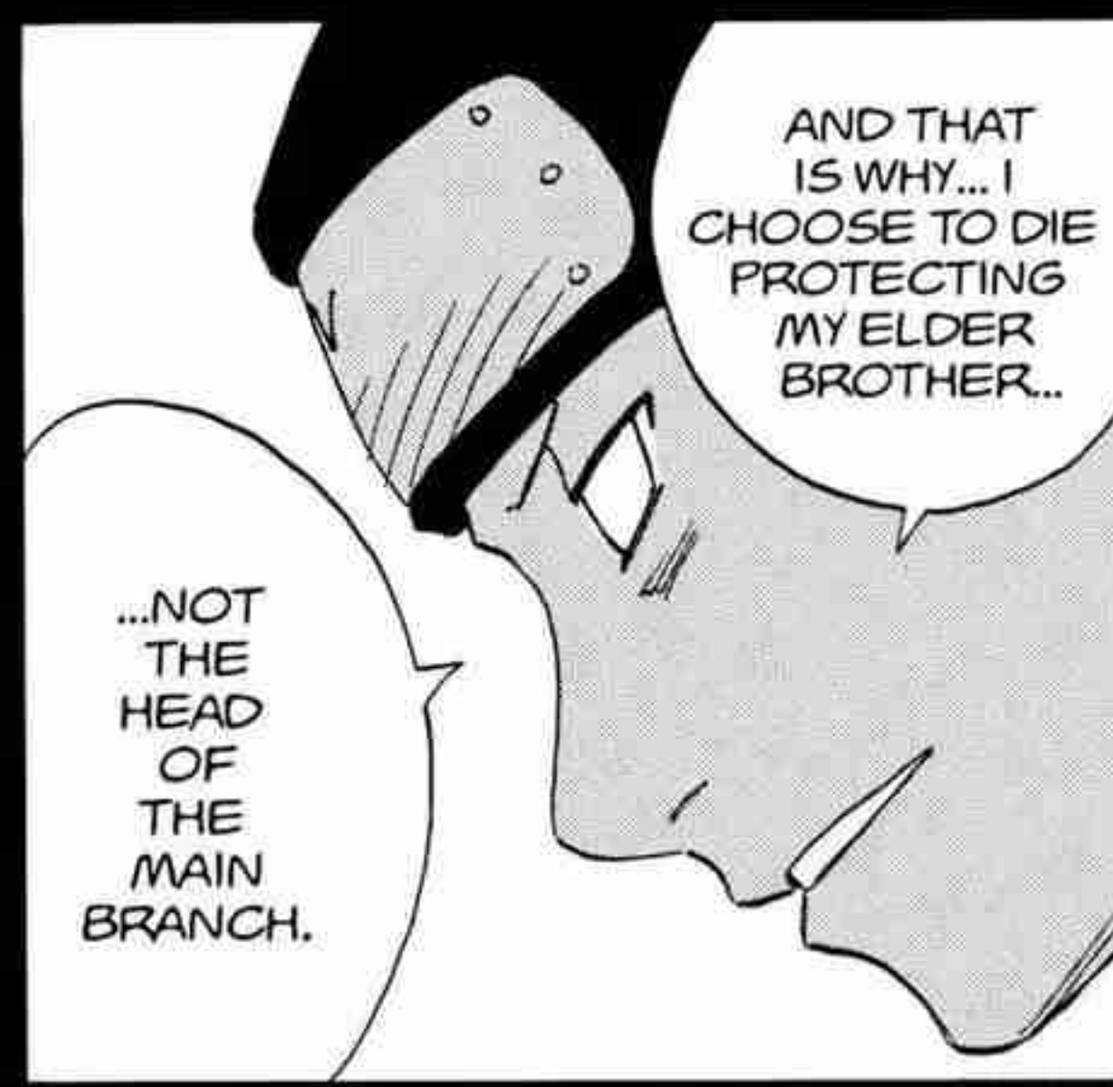
B-BUT...YOU'VE GOT NEJI TO WORRY ABOUT TOO... WHY DO THIS FOR THE MAIN BRANCH...?

I... HAVE LONG RESENTED THE MAIN BRANCH.
TO BE HONEST, I STILL ABHOR YOU ALL...

!

...

IT WILL BE THE FIRST DECISION...
...I HAVE EVER BEEN ABLE TO MAKE FOR MYSELF.
...


AND THAT IS WHY... I CHOOSE TO DIE PROTECTING MY ELDER BROTHER...
...NOT THE HEAD OF THE MAIN BRANCH.

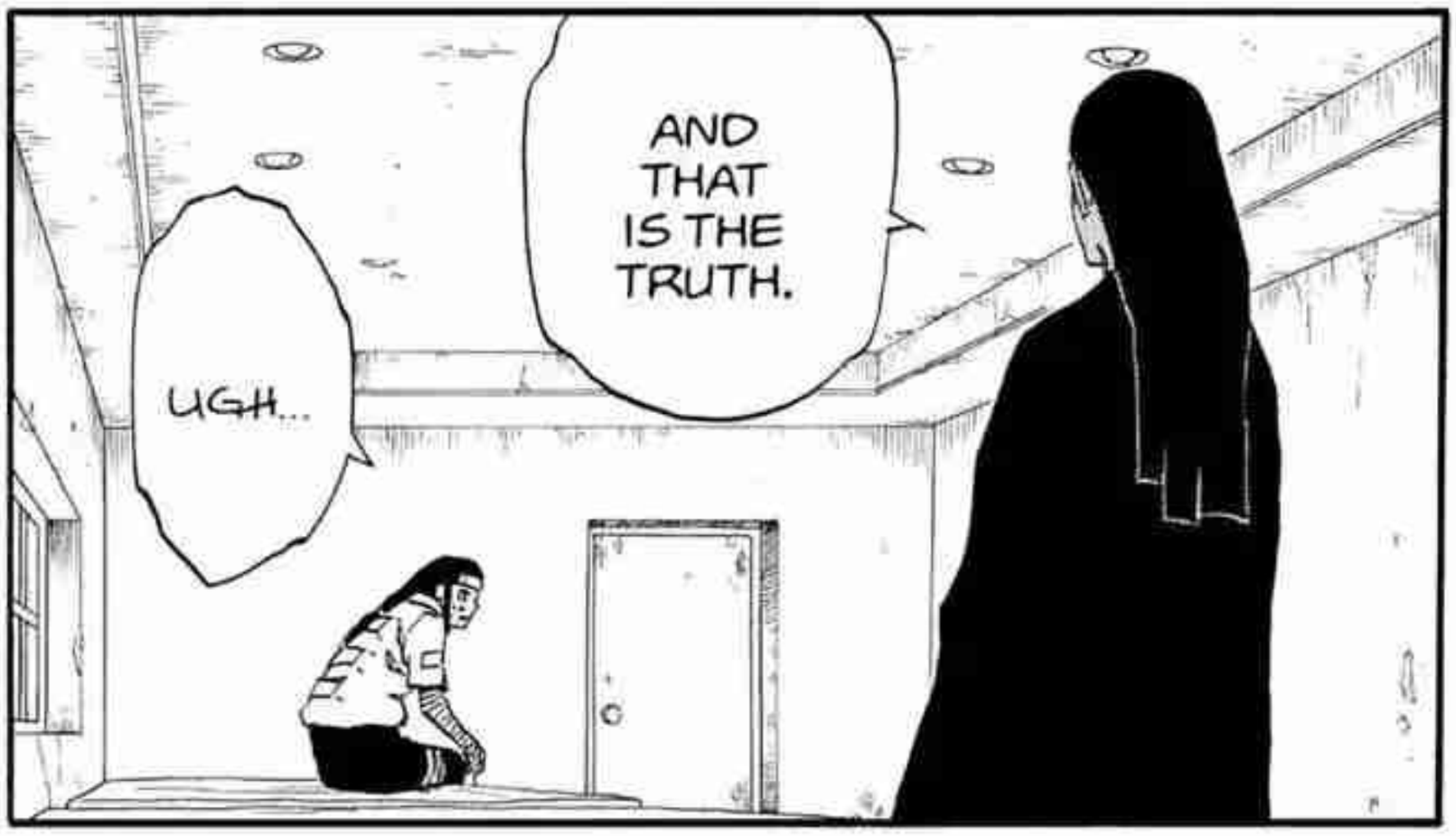
BUT HERE, TODAY...
...MY OWN WILL HAS FINALLY AWAKENED.
NEJI HAS GROWN UP SEEING ONLY THE UGLY SIDE OF ME...

...

SO PLEASE CONVEY TO NEJI...
...

...THAT I WAS NOT MURDERED TO PROTECT THE MAIN BRANCH...
...BUT THAT I FREELY CHOSE TO DIE...
...IN ORDER TO PROTECT NEJI, MY SIBLINGS, THE CLAN AND THE ENTIRE VILLAGE!

...
SO... BY CHOOSING YOUR OWN DEATH... YOU GAIN FREEDOM...?
BROTHER... I ALWAYS WANTED TO DEFY THE HYUGA DESTINY, EVEN IF ONLY ONCE...
I JUST WANTED TO CHOOSE MY OWN DESTINY... THAT'S ALL...


AND THAT IS THE TRUTH.
UGH...

AND THAT IS WHY I AM TELLING YOU THIS NOW...
I KNEW YOU WOULD THINK SO... THAT IS WHY I WAITED THIS LONG.

WHAT A CONVENIENT EXPLANATION! IT SOUNDS EXACTLY LIKE SOMETHING THE MAIN BRANCH WOULD COOK UP TO PLACATE ME...
YOU CAN'T REALLY EXPECT ME TO BELIEVE THAT STORY!
ESPECIALLY AFTER ALL THIS TIME...!

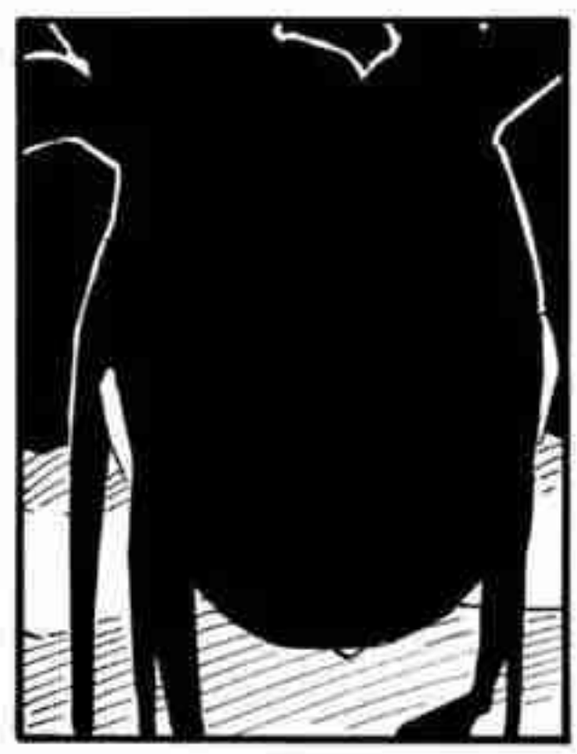
!!

...NOT AS HEAD OF THE MAIN BRANCH, BUT AS HIZASHI'S OLDER BROTHER ...!
I WANTED TO RELAY MY BROTHER'S FINAL WORDS TO YOU...

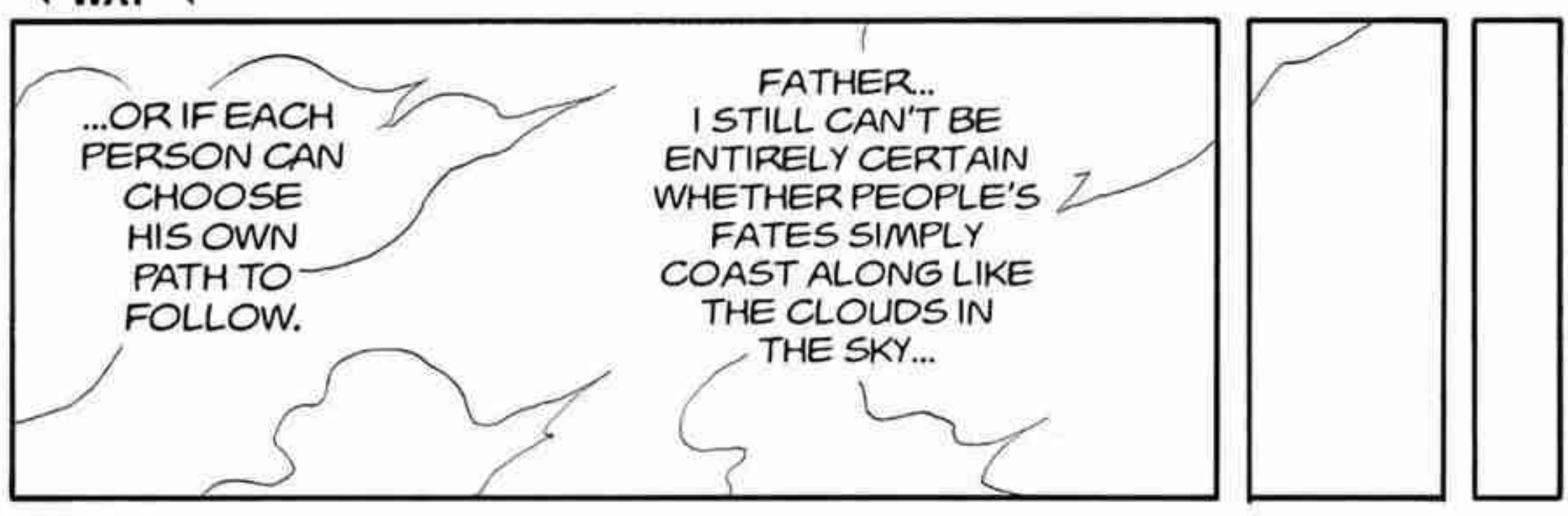
FEH...

BOW

PLEASE BELIEVE ME...

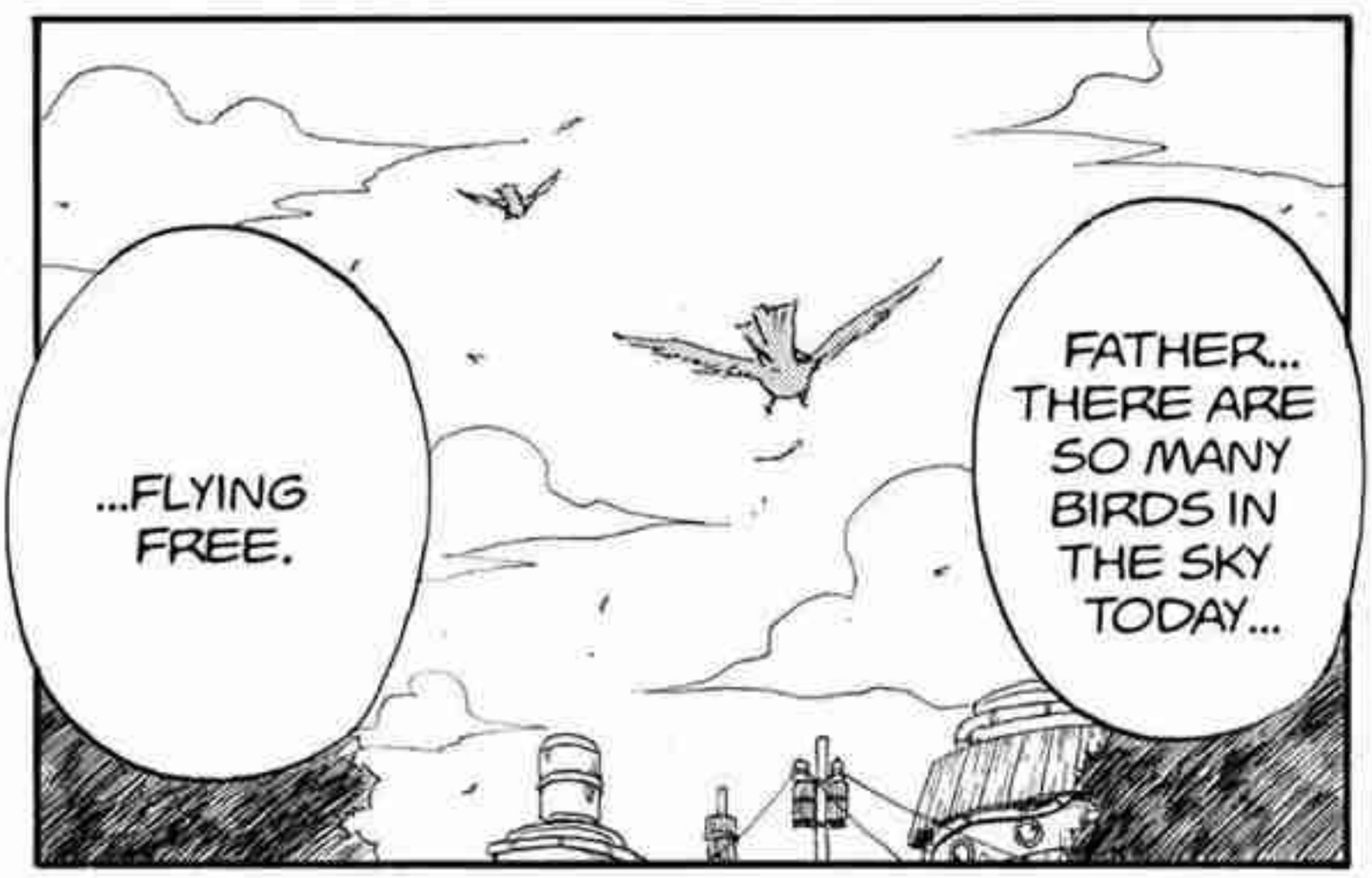


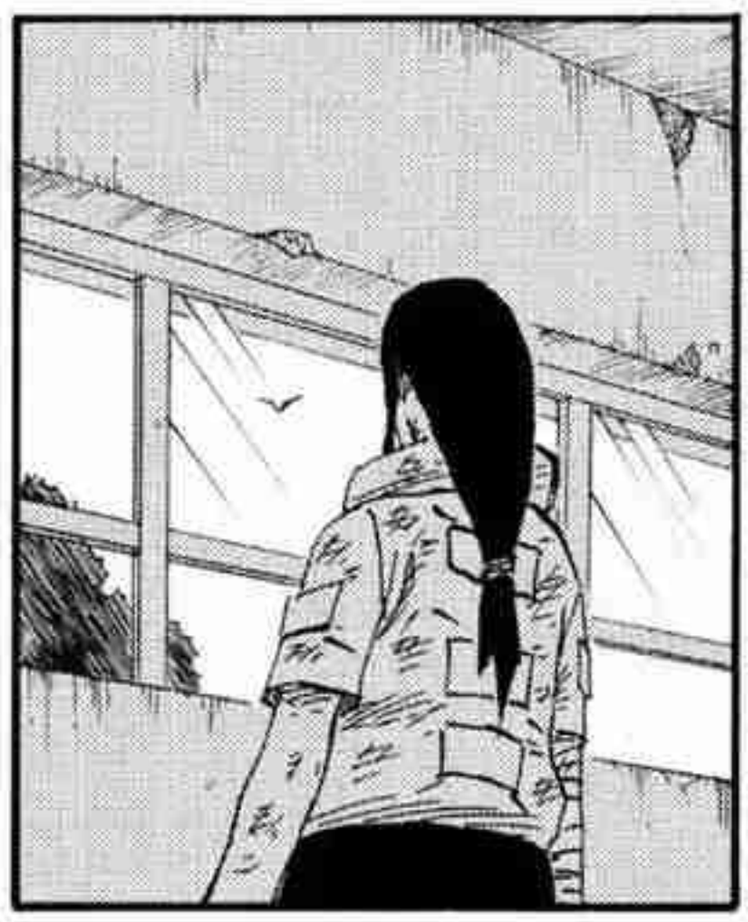
READ
THIS
WAY


...OR IF EACH PERSON CAN CHOOSE HIS OWN PATH TO FOLLOW.
FATHER... I STILL CAN'T BE ENTIRELY CERTAIN WHETHER PEOPLE'S FATES SIMPLY COAST ALONG LIKE THE CLOUDS IN THE SKY...

AND IN MY MATCH TODAY, I FINALLY LEARNED THAT PEOPLE WITH DREAMS ARE THE ONES WHO ARE TRULY STRONG.
BUT WHEN YOU DECIDE TO FOLLOW YOUR OWN PATH, YOU CAN STRIVE TO ACHIEVE YOUR OWN DREAMS.
I SUPPOSE THE DESTINATION MIGHT BE THE SAME EITHER WAY.

...TO BECOME STRONGER. RIGHT NOW, I WANT TO BECOME SO STRONG, I WILL NEVER LOSE TO ANYONE AGAIN.
AND... FATHER... MY DREAM IS SIMPLE...


...FLYING FREE.
FATHER... THERE ARE SO MANY BIRDS IN THE SKY TODAY...



NARUTO
2周年
おめでとう
ございます!!
CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR
SECOND ANNIVERSARY!!

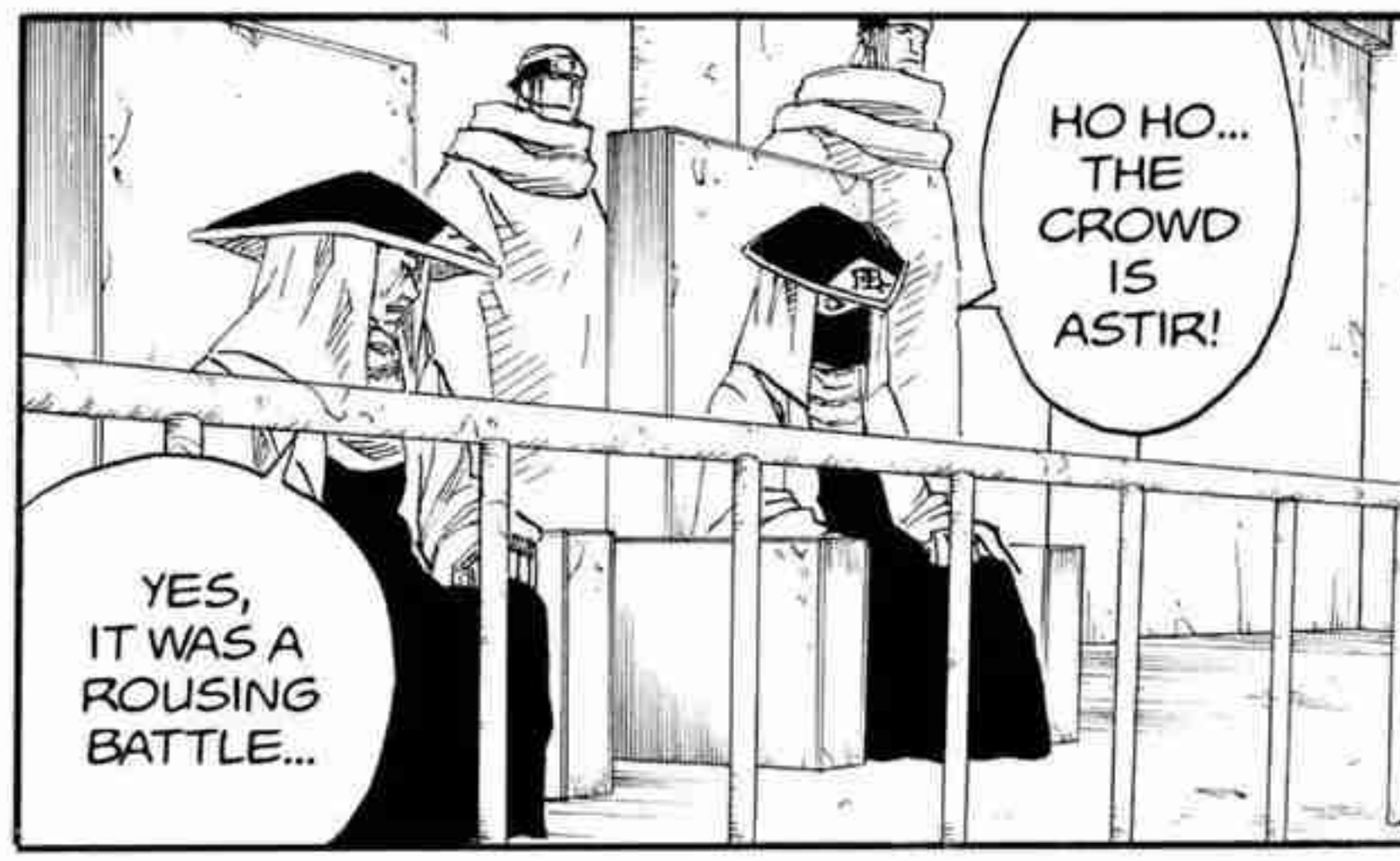
Number 106:
Sasuke Forfeits...?!

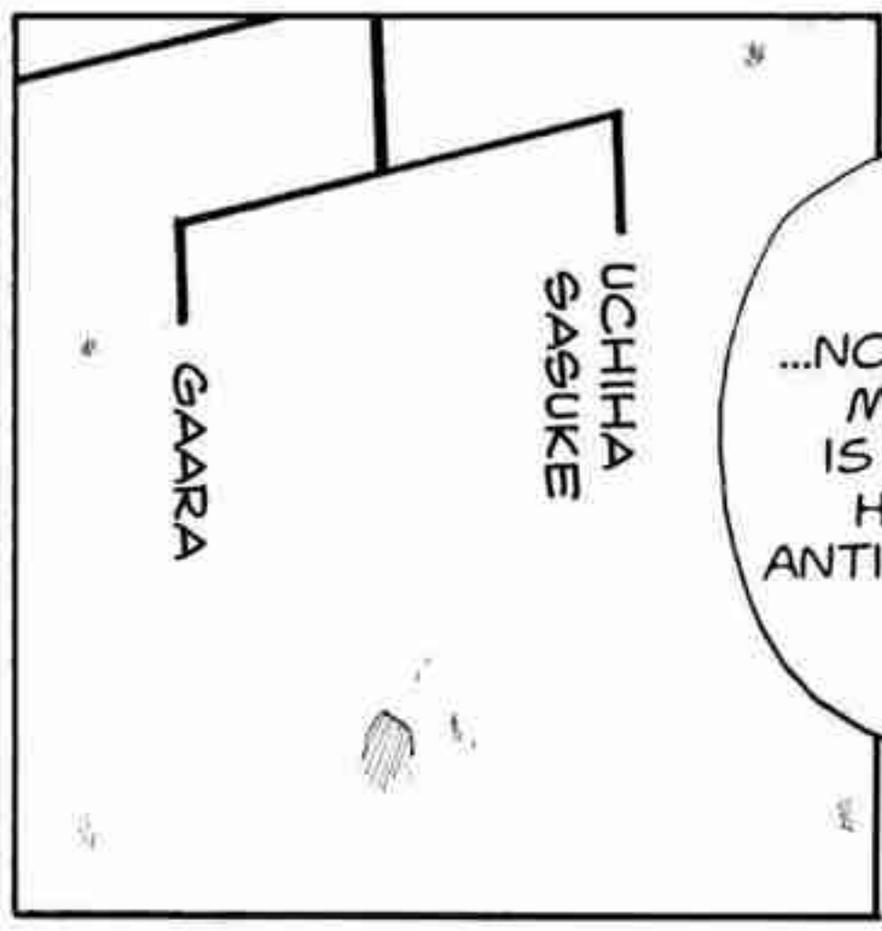
BUZZ

BUZZ

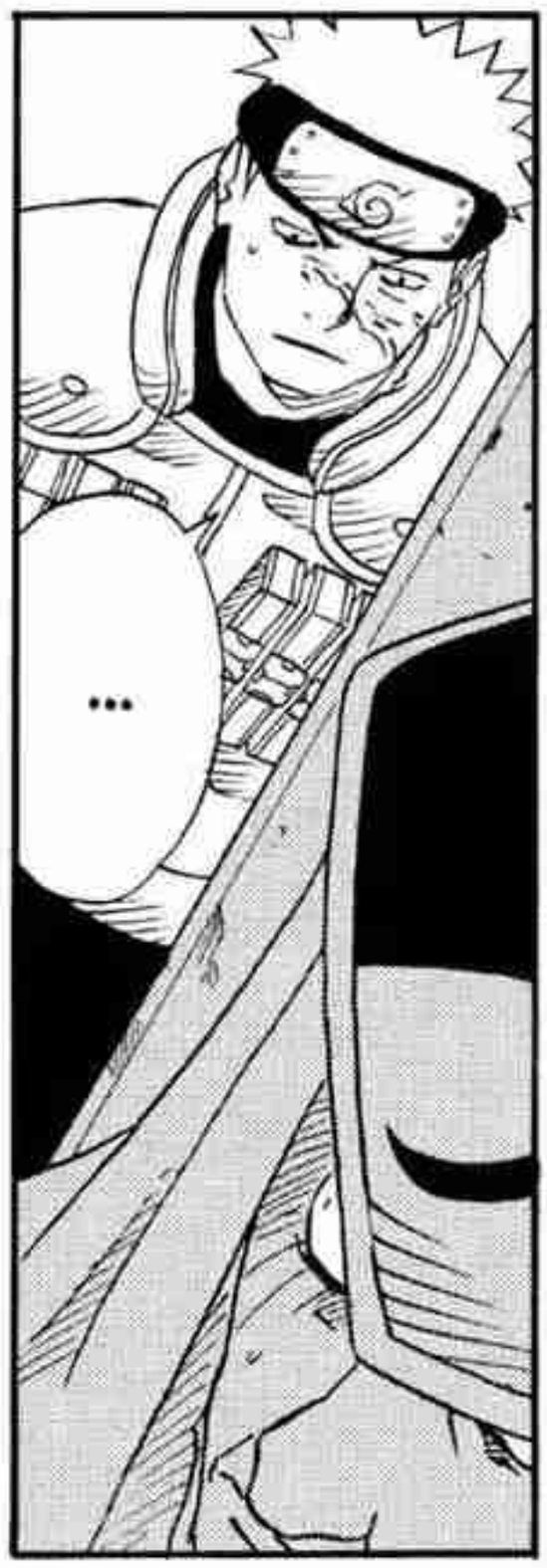
BUZZ

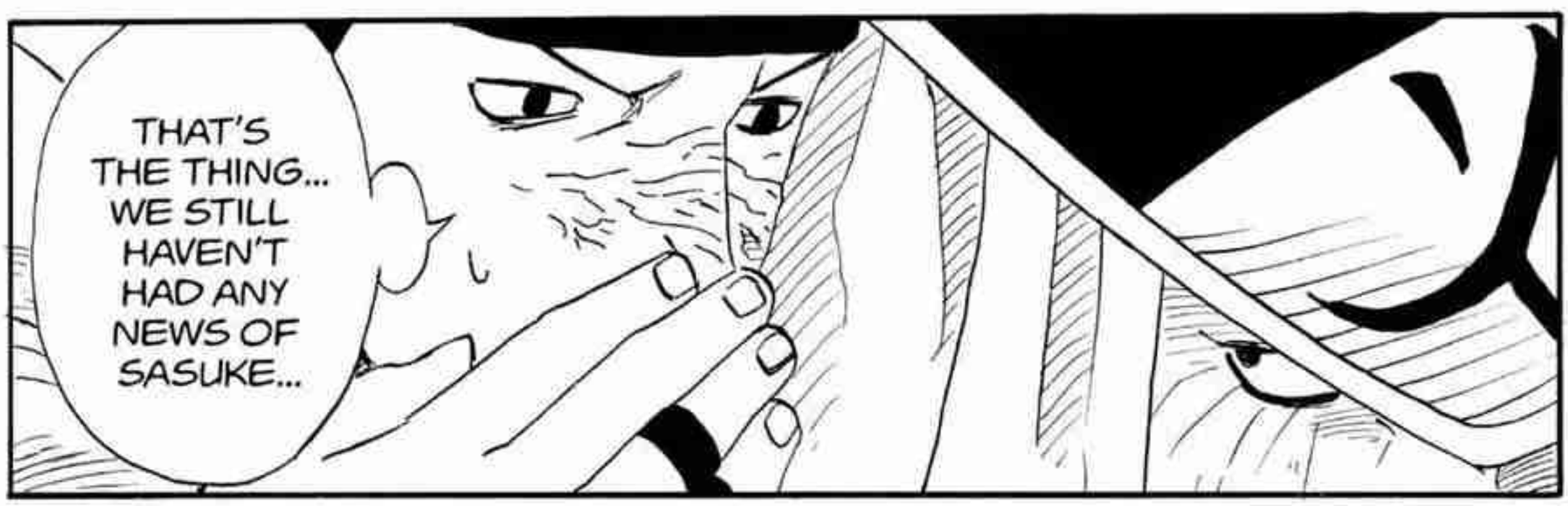
BUZZ

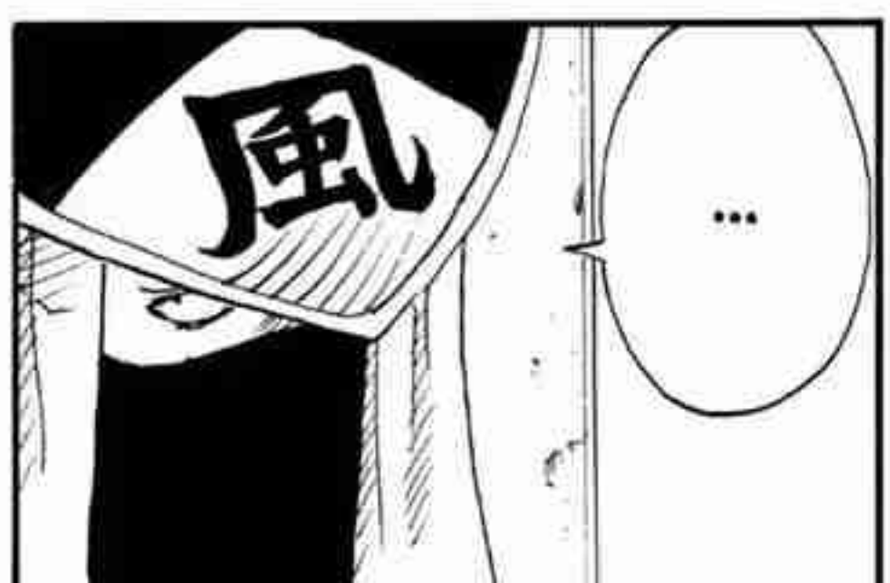


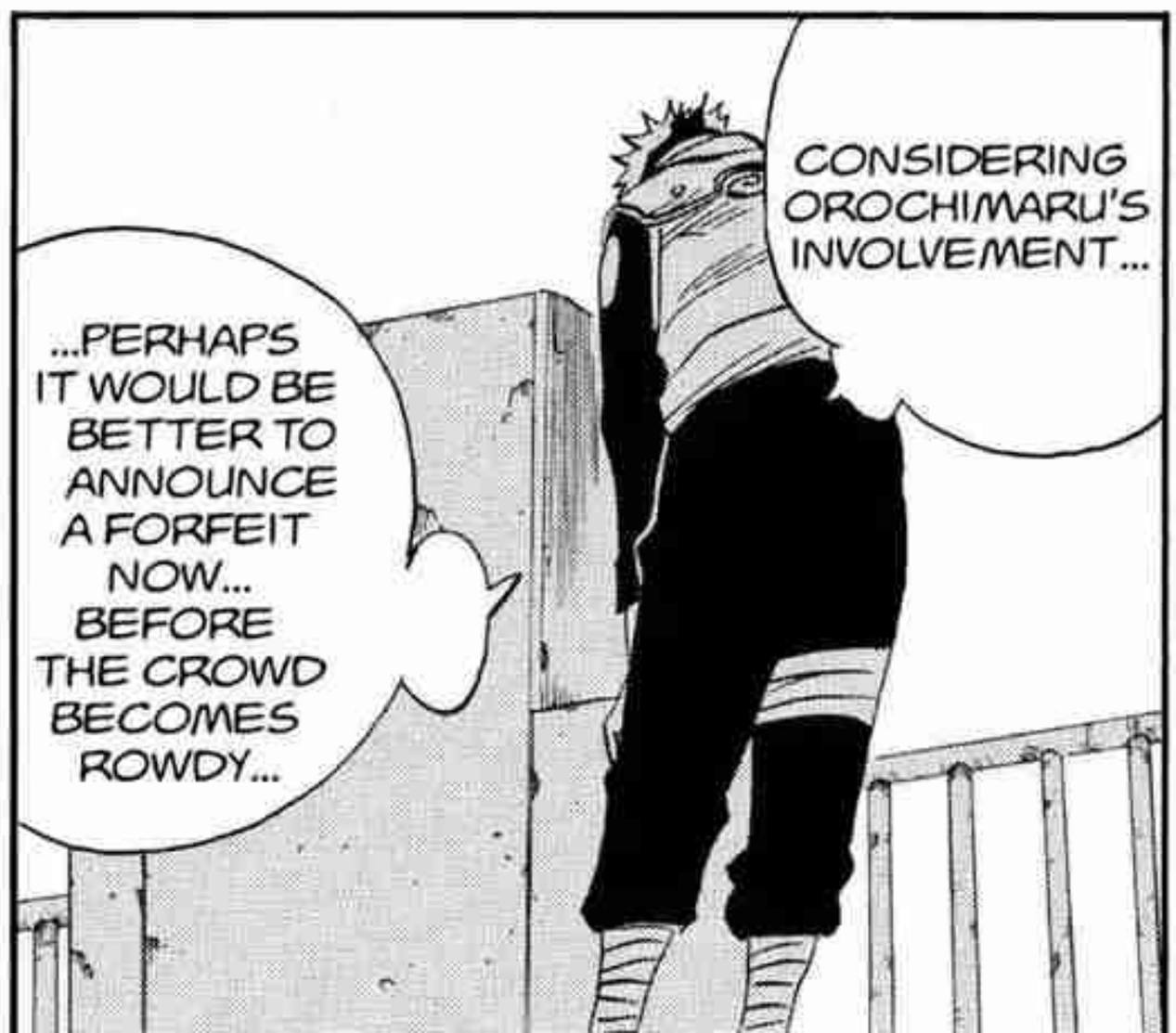


READ THIS WAY







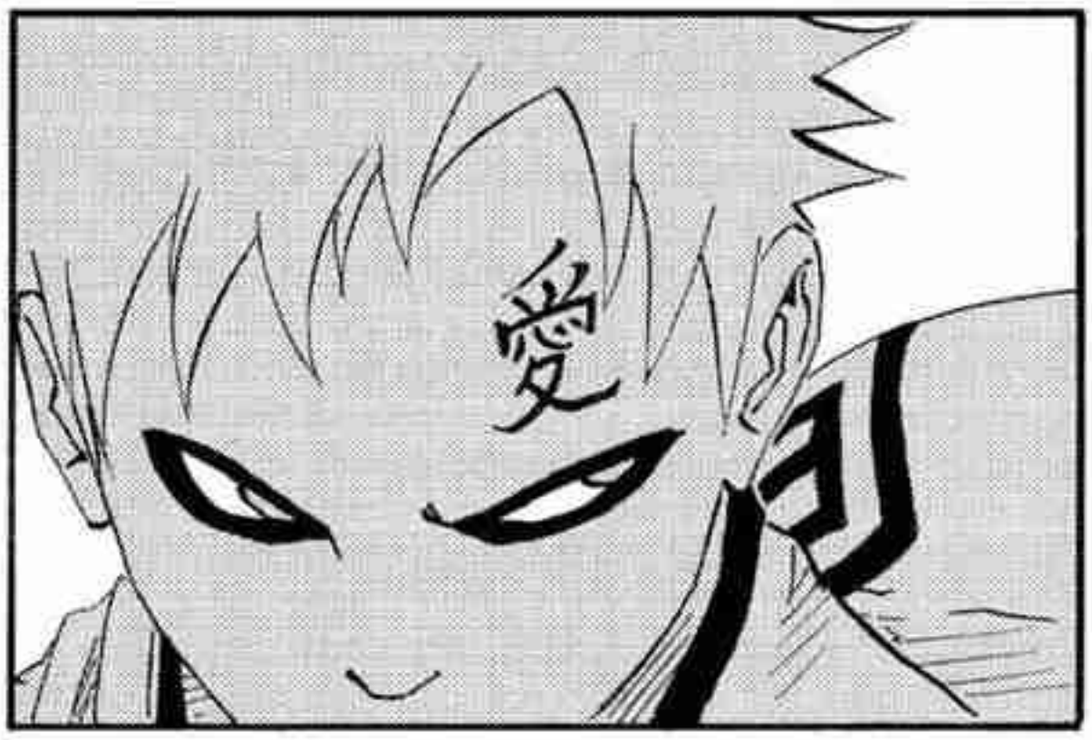


HOW LONG ARE YOU GONNA MAKE US WAIT, HUH?!

WHAT'S GOING ON?! HURRY UP AND START THE NEXT MATCH!!

OF COURSE HE'LL COME...
NO DOUBT ABOUT IT!

...WHAT ARE YOU GUYS TALKING ABOUT...?

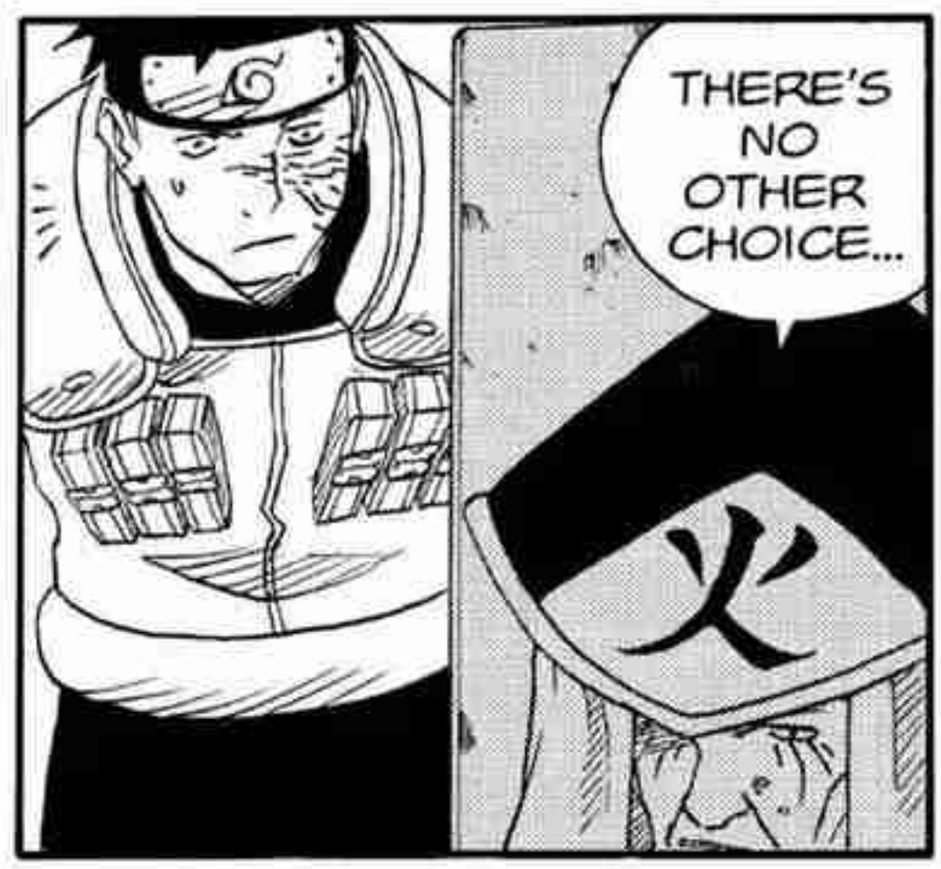

愛

IF YOU DON'T SHOW UP SOON... YOU'LL BE DISQUALIFIED!
...BUT... WHERE THE HECK ARE YOU...?

...

SASUKE WILL BE ELIMINATED BY FORFEIT!
AS THE RULES DICTATE...
火

...
火

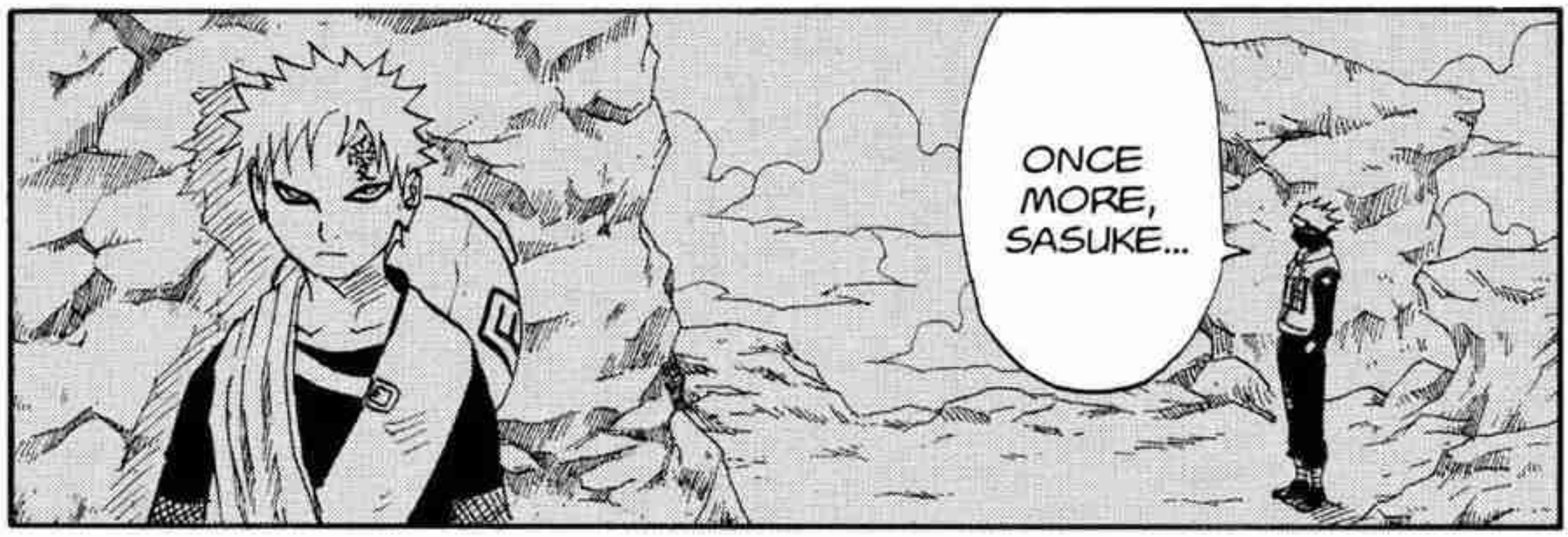

THERE'S NO OTHER CHOICE...
火

THIS IS STARTING TO LOOK BAD...
...WHAT THE HECK ARE WE GONNA DO?! WITHOUT HIM, OUR PLAN IS RUINED...

...UGH...

...
愛

I'M GOING... TO VERIFY MY EXIS-TENCE.
UGH... DON'T TELL ME...
愛
I REALLY HOPE GAARA DIDN'T KILL THE BOY...
MAN... I CAN'T BELIEVE IT...

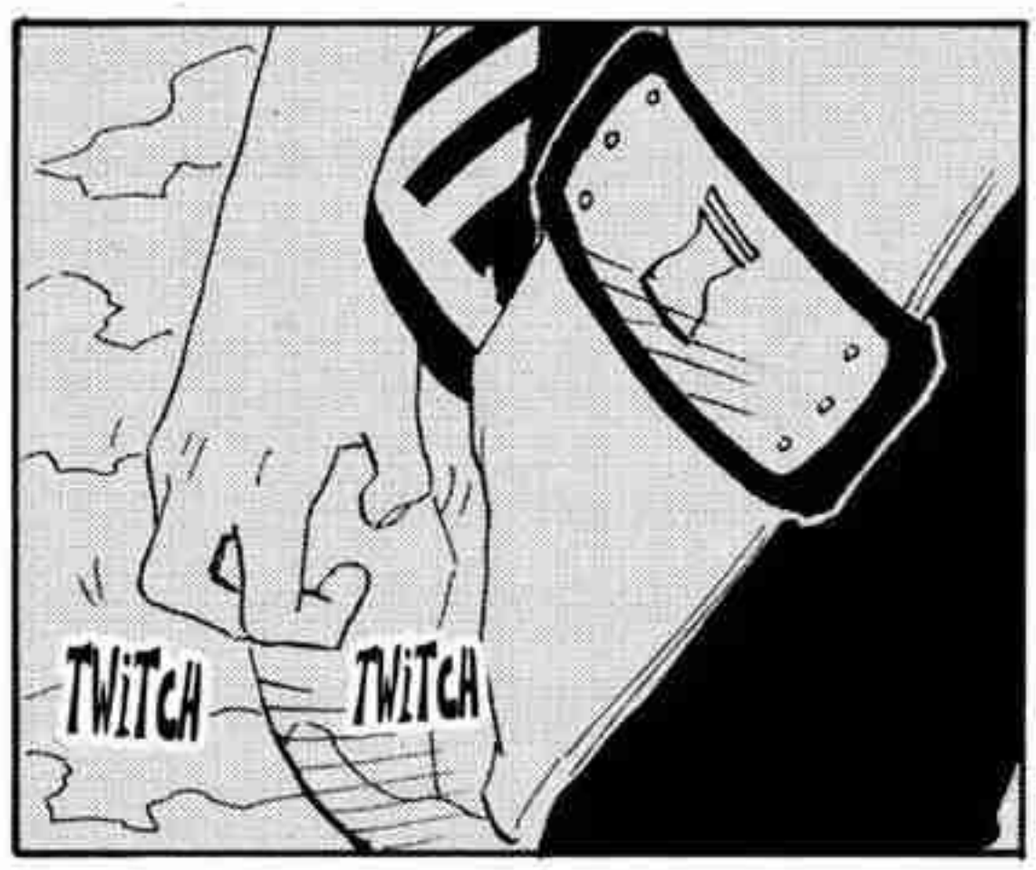

ONCE MORE, SASUKE...

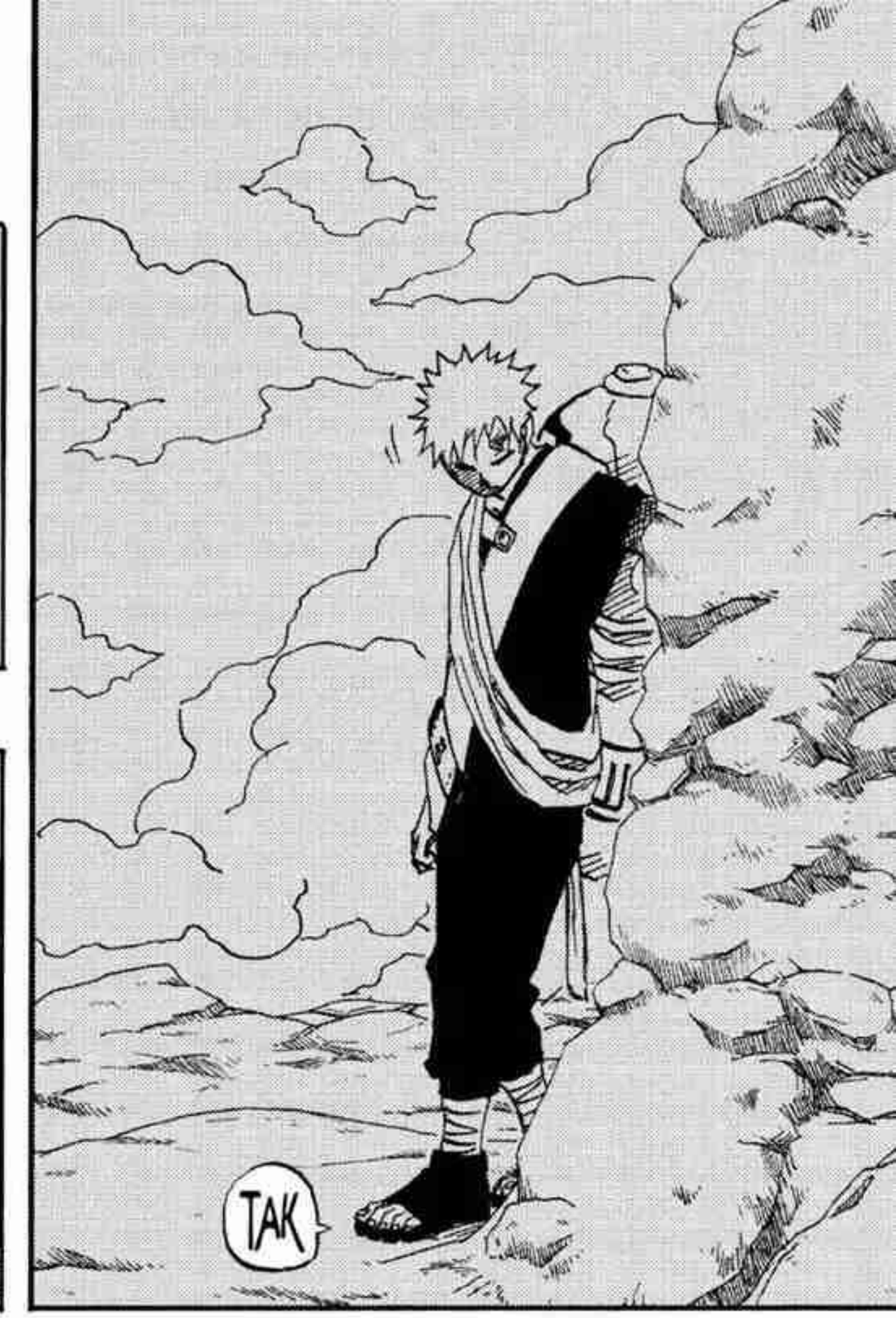
I KNOW YOU'RE THERE... THE BLOODLUST IS RADIATING OFF YOU.
WHY DON'T YOU COME ON OUT...?

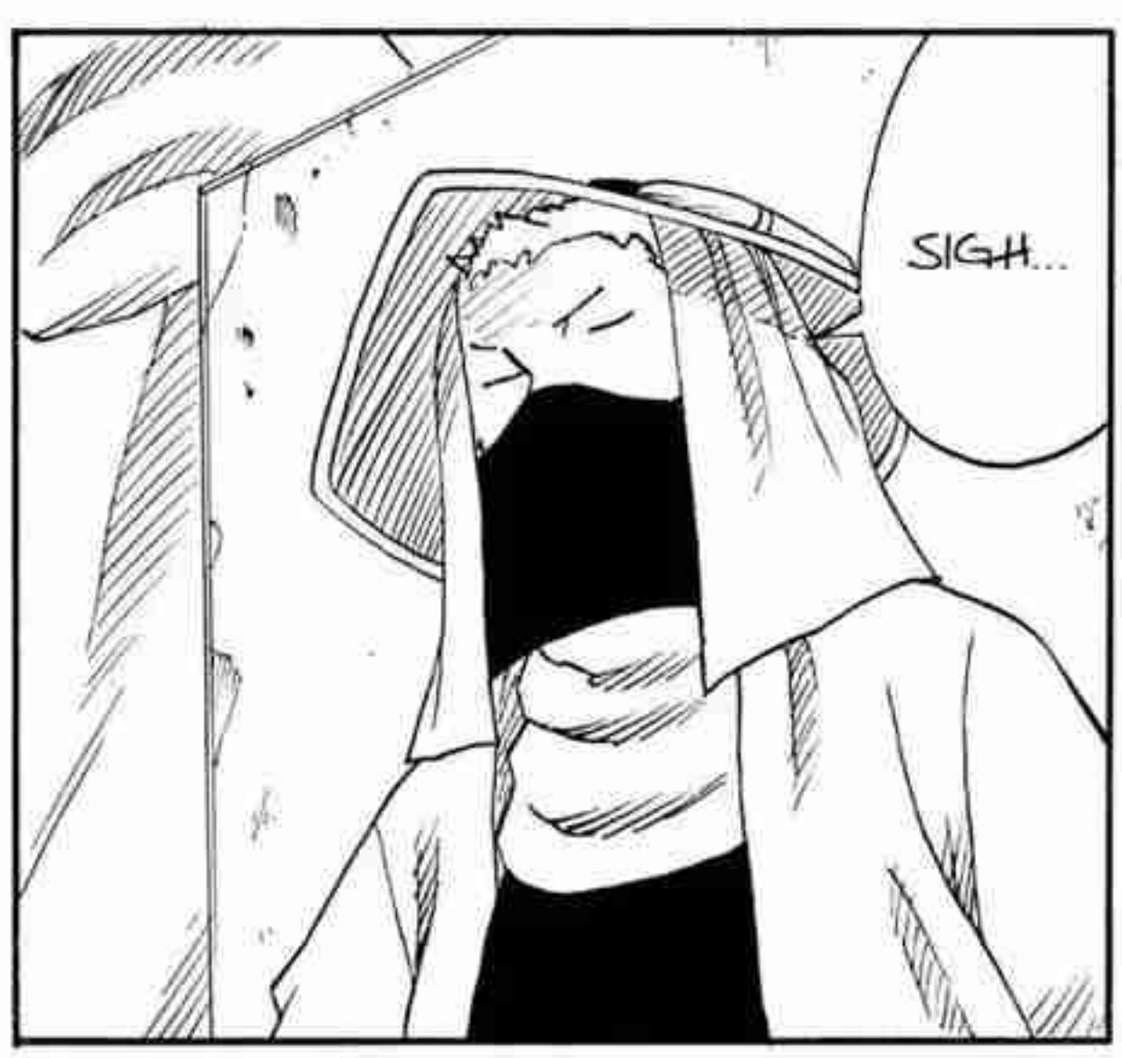
...
...WHAT IS IT?

...!

IT'S YOU...?

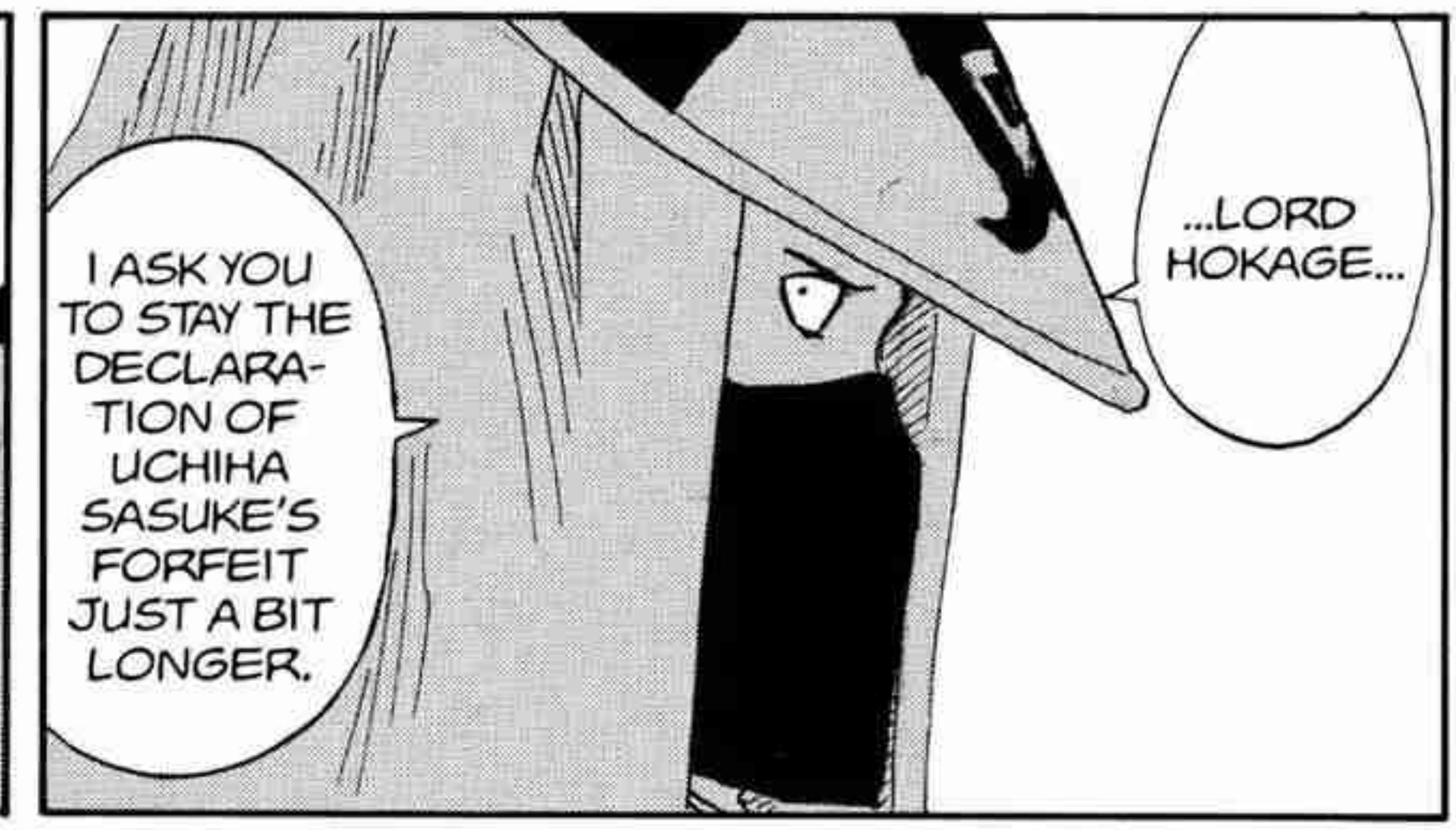

TWITCH
TWITCH

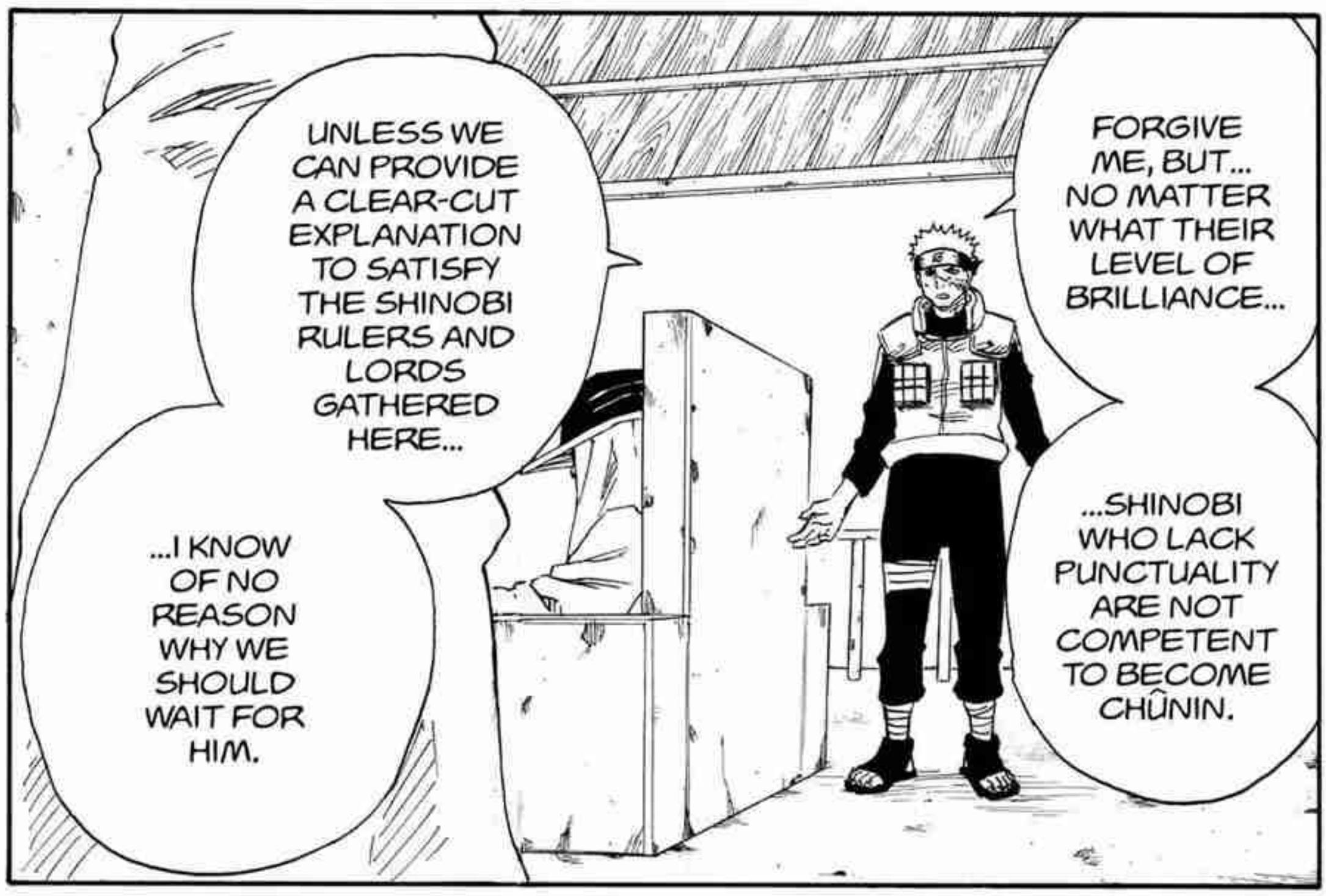

TAK


SIGH...

愛

...!


I ASK YOU TO STAY THE DECLARATION OF UCHIHA SASUKE'S FORFEIT JUST A BIT LONGER.
...LORD HOKAGE...


UNLESS WE CAN PROVIDE A CLEAR-CUT EXPLANATION TO SATISFY THE SHINOBI RULERS AND LORDS GATHERED HERE...
...I KNOW OF NO REASON WHY WE SHOULD WAIT FOR HIM.
FORGIVE ME, BUT... NO MATTER WHAT THEIR LEVEL OF BRILLIANCE...
...SHINOBI WHO LACK PUNCTUALITY ARE NOT COMPETENT TO BECOME CHÛNIN.

!!

?!

I SEE...
BUT... THERE IS SUFFICIENT REASON...

...

A MAJORITY OF THE SHINOBI RULERS AND LORDS HERE, INCLUDING MYSELF...
...CAME HERE ALMOST SOLELY TO OBSERVE THAT MATCH.

...

...

AND AS LEADER OF THE LAND OF WIND, I BESEECH YOU...
...TO ALLOW HIM TO FACE GAARA.
THIS BOY IS THE LAST OF THE UCHIHA CLAN...

...BUT--

...WE'LL POSTPONE THE MATCH... TO WAIT FOR SASUKE.
VERY WELL...

...SIR?

SASUKE MAY NEVER SHOW UP, BUT... THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO.
...

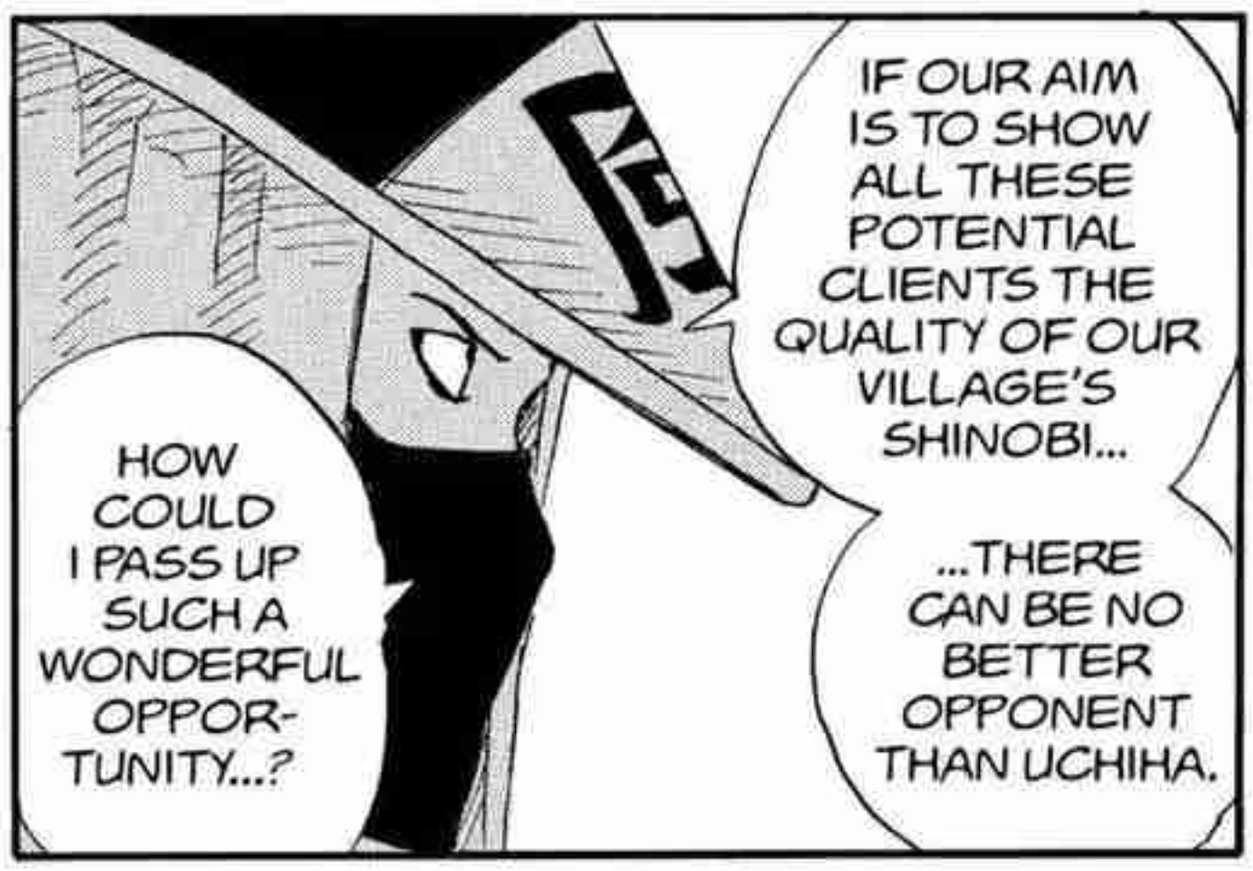
...
INFORM THE PROCTOR...

LORD HOKAGE! ARE YOU SURE?

...

LEAP!

...YES, SIR.
...


IF OUR AIM IS TO SHOW ALL THESE POTENTIAL CLIENTS THE QUALITY OF OUR VILLAGE'S SHINOBI...
...THERE CAN BE NO BETTER OPPONENT THAN UCHIHA.
HOW COULD I PASS UP SUCH A WONDERFUL OPPOR-TUNITY...?

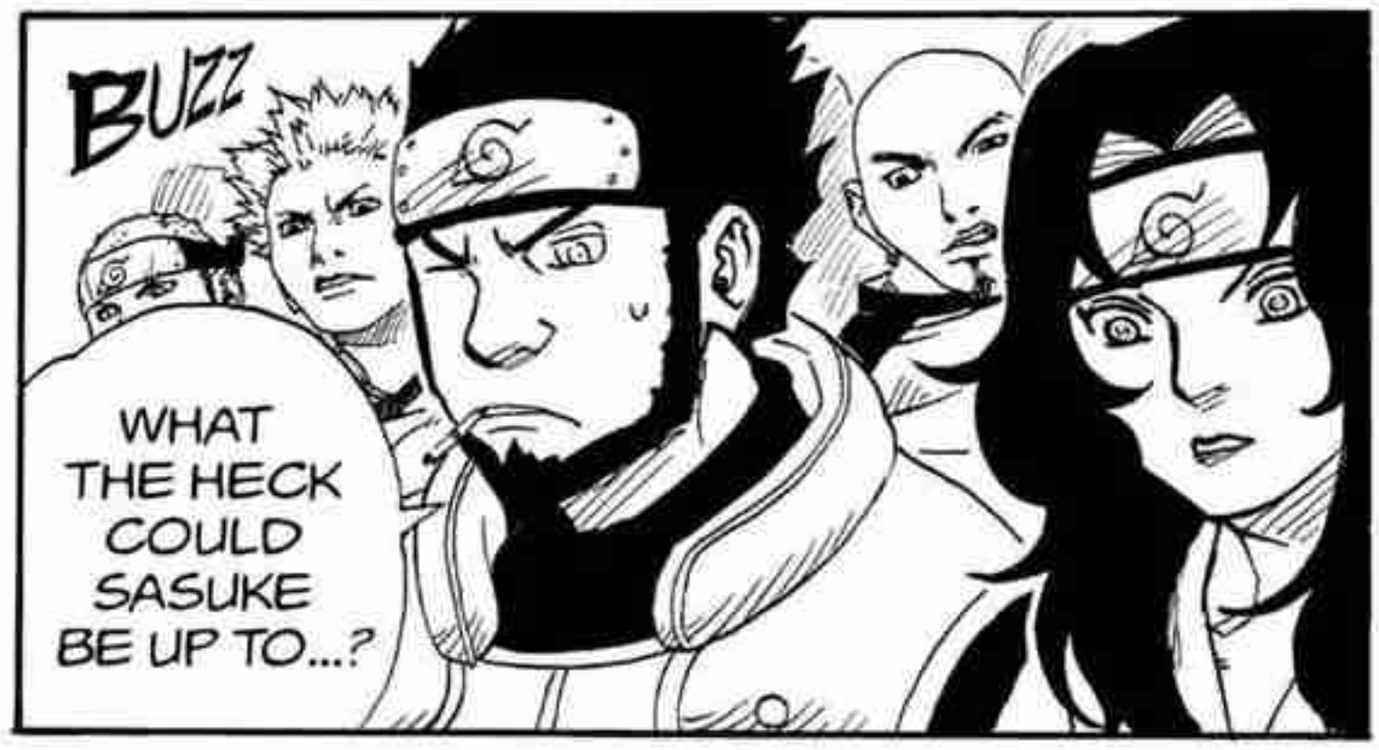
WELL, LORD KAZEKAGE... YOU ARE RARELY SO INSISTENT! I MUST SAY I'M SURPRISED...
WHY IS THAT...?

WHERE'S UCHIHA?!
OKAY...
HEY, WHAT'S THE HOLD-UP?!

!!

SO...
EVERY-ONE!
...THIS MATCH WILL BE POSTPONED... AND WE WILL PROCEED WITH THE NEXT SCHEDULED MATCH!
ONE OF THE CONTENDERS FOR THE MATCH HAS NOT ARRIVED YET.

...


BUZZ
WHAT THE HECK COULD SASUKE BE UP TO...?

ALL RIGHT! SASUKE WON'T BE FORCED TO FORFEIT!

HEY! YOU MEAN MY MATCH HAS BEEN MOVED UP?!

SIGH... THAT'S A RELIEF!
PHEW

WELL THEN... THE NEXT PAIRING IS KANKURO AGAINST ABURAME SHINO.
PLEASE COME DOWN!

THIS MATCH IS UTTERLY TRIVIAL, AND...

UGH...

...
...

...MORE IMPORTANTLY... IF I REVEAL KARASU'S "HIDDEN MECHANISMS" TO THE ENEMY SO SOON, IT MIGHT JEOPARDIZE THE PLAN!

!!
HUH?!

...I WITHDRAW!

!!
GRAB
FEH...
WHAT?!
!!
FWSH
OKAY!!

TAP

FEH...

FWSH

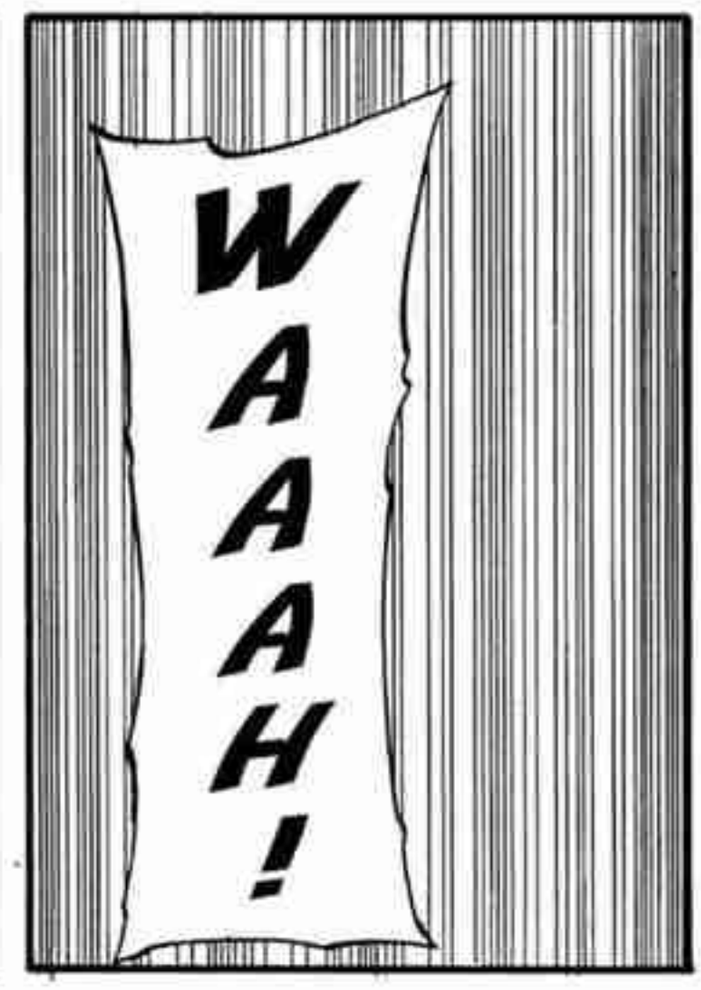
WHY AM I ALWAYS GETTING SHAFTED IN THE MATCH SCHEDULE, HUH?
HEY! HEY! WHAT'S THE RUSH?! HOLD YOUR HORSES!
DARN IT... I SHOULD JUST WITHDRAW, TOO...

WELL, AT LEAST YOU SEEM WILLING TO FIGHT!
HEY! FINAL CANDIDATE, GET DOWN HERE!!

SHOVE
HUH?!
ALL RIGHT! GO GET 'EM, SHIKAMARU!!

NARUTO, YOU JERK...
UGH...

THUD


WAAAH!

...

JUST GET IT OVER WITH!!
HEY! START THE MATCH, ALREADY!

AND NOW THEY'RE BEING OFFERED A POOR SUBSTITUTE FOR THE MAIN ATTRACTION... EVERYONE'S ANNOYED...
SIGH... EVERYBODY WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO SASUKE'S MATCH...
HOW LONG ARE YOU GONNA LIE THERE? GET UP, KID!

WHAT, YOU'RE GONNA GIVE UP, TOO?!

NO ONE CARES ABOUT THE OUTCOME OF MY MATCH...
...IS THERE ANY POINT IN FIGHTING?

GET UP AND FIGHT!!
HEY, SHIKAMARU!!

SIGH... HE DOESN'T HAVE A COMPETITIVE BONE IN HIS BODY...

I'M UP AGAINST A GIRL AGAIN...?

HEY! I HAVEN'T TOLD YOU TO START YET...
IF YOU WON'T COME TO ME, I'M GONNA GO TO YOU!!
DASH

FW UP

SHF
SHEESH... THIS CHICK REALLY WANTS TO FIGHT.

...I CAN'T STAND THE IDEA OF LOSING TO A GIRL, SO...
I DON'T REALLY CARE WHETHER I BECOME A CHŪNIN OR NOT, BUT...
...I GUESS I'M IN!
!

BOOM
!!

THE RESULTS OF THE SECOND CHARACTER POPULARITY SURVEY!!

SECOND ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION!

Number 107: The Boy with No Fighting Spirit!!

19TH PLACE
NINE-TAILED FOX
170 VOTES

18TH PLACE
MASTER GUY
172 VOTES

ROAR!

17TH PLACE
INUZUKA KIBA
199 VOTES

16TH PLACE
NARA SHIKAMARU
245 VOTES

20TH PLACE
AKAMARU
138 VOTES

TOTAL NUMBER OF ENTRIES:
17,395 VOTES!!

THE RESULTS OF THE SECOND CHARACTER POPULARITY SURVEY!!

DISAPPOINTED?! SURPRISED?!
MAYBE YOUR FAVORITE CHARACTER IS STILL BELOW!

22ND PLACE	23RD PLACE	24TH PLACE	25TH PLACE	26TH PLACE	27TH PLACE
KABUTO 122 VOTES	TADPOLE 113 VOTES	ABURAME SHINO 110 VOTES	MITARASHI ANKO 108 VOTES	OROCHIMARU 105 VOTES	EXAM PROCTOR A 100 VOTES

28TH PLACE	29TH PLACE	30TH PLACE	31ST PLACE	32ND PLACE	33RD PLACE
TEMARI 94 VOTES	SARUTOBI ASUMA 92 VOTES	TENTEN 75 VOTES	KANKURO 64 VOTES	YAMANAKA INO 63 VOTES	UCHIHA ITACHI 62 VOTES

34TH PLACE
EXAM PROCTOR B
50 VOTES

35TH PLACE
YUHI KURENAI
49 VOTES

36TH PLACE	POOCHIE/SHOOTING STAR	33 VOTES
37TH PLACE	KONOHAMARU	29 VOTES
38TH PLACE	DOSUKINUTA	28 VOTES
39TH PLACE	SQUIRREL	26 VOTES
40TH PLACE	SNOWSHOE HARE	25 VOTES
41ST PLACE	NINJA DOGS	
	INARI	24 VOTES
43RD PLACE	MORINO IBIKI	20 VOTES
44TH PLACE	MASTER EBISU	
	SPECIAL JONIN NINJA B	17 VOTES
46TH PLACE	KONOHA BLACK OPS A	
	KIN TSUCHI	16 VOTES
48TH PLACE	NINJA TURTLE	
	JIRAIYA'S TOAD	14 VOTES
50TH PLACE	AKIMICHI CHOJI	13 VOTES

21ST PLACE
KISHIMOTO MASASHI
126 VOTES

...TO THE NEXT ONE ALREADY!!

I'M LOOKING FORWARD...

KISHIMOTO-SENSEI'S THOUGHTS
IT'S A REAL CONFIDENCE-BOOSTER THAT NARUTO CAME IN FIRST...BUT TO ALL THE CHARACTERS WHO LOST TO THE TADPOLE... FOR SHAME! THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO VOTED.

CAST YOUR VOTE!
WRITE TO:
VIZ MEDIA, LLC
SHONEN JUMP/NARUTO CHARACTER POLL
P.O. BOX 77010
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94107

READ THIS WAY
HMPH!!
FLAP
...I GUESS I'M IN!
...I CAN'T STAND THE IDEA OF LOSING TO A GIRL, SO...
ROAR
WHOOSH
HE'S PRETTY QUICK...
!

BUT... IT'S NOT LIKE A BOY CAN JUST CLOBBER A GIRL, EITHER...

HUF

HUF

...

SHIKAMARU! JUST HIT HER WITH A 16-PUNCH COMBO!!!

KNOCK HER BLOCK OFF!

OH... IT'S YOU.

IS YOUR STOMACH BETTER ALREADY?

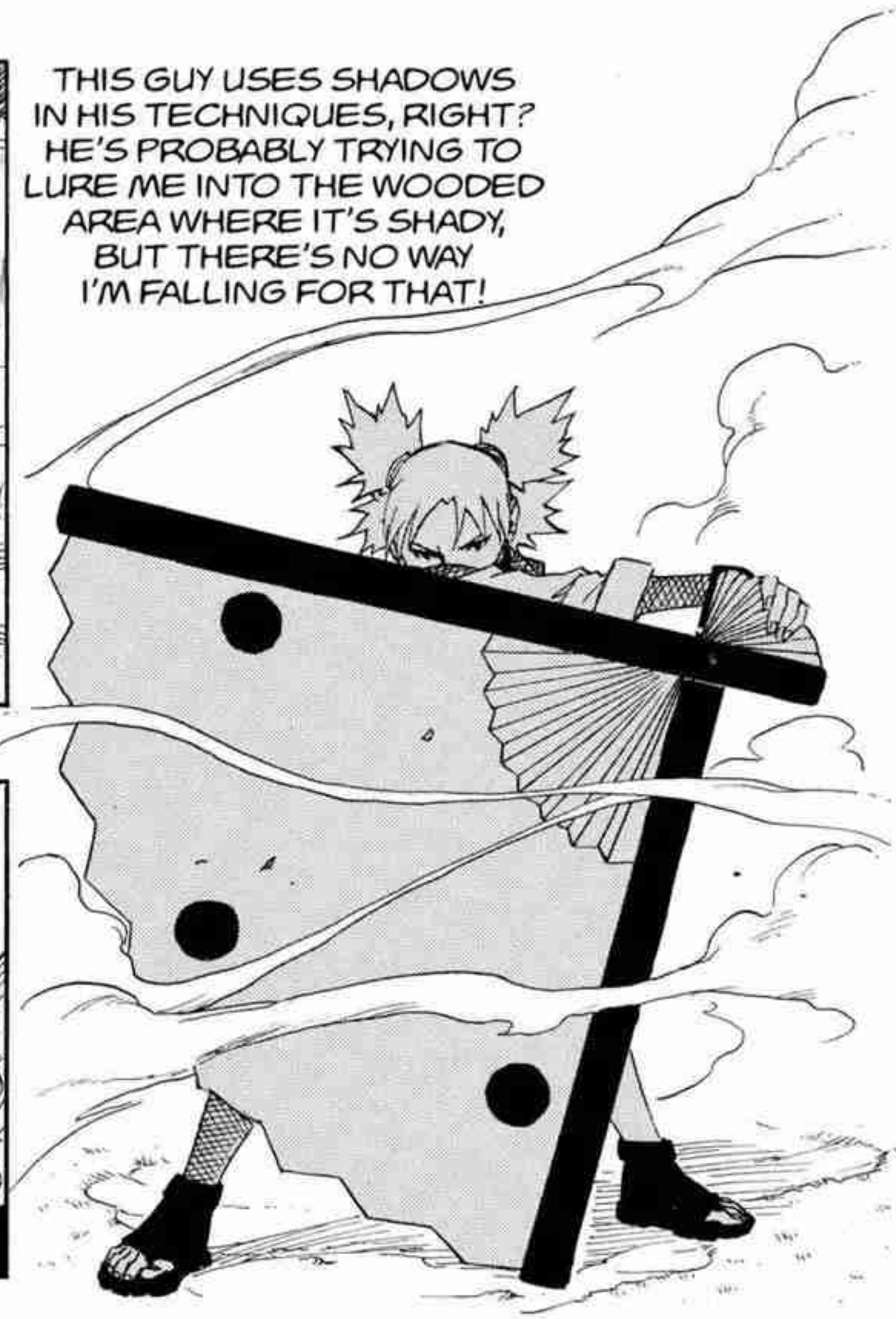
MUNCH MUNCH

POTATO CHIPS BBQ

...

IS THIS SEAT TAKEN?

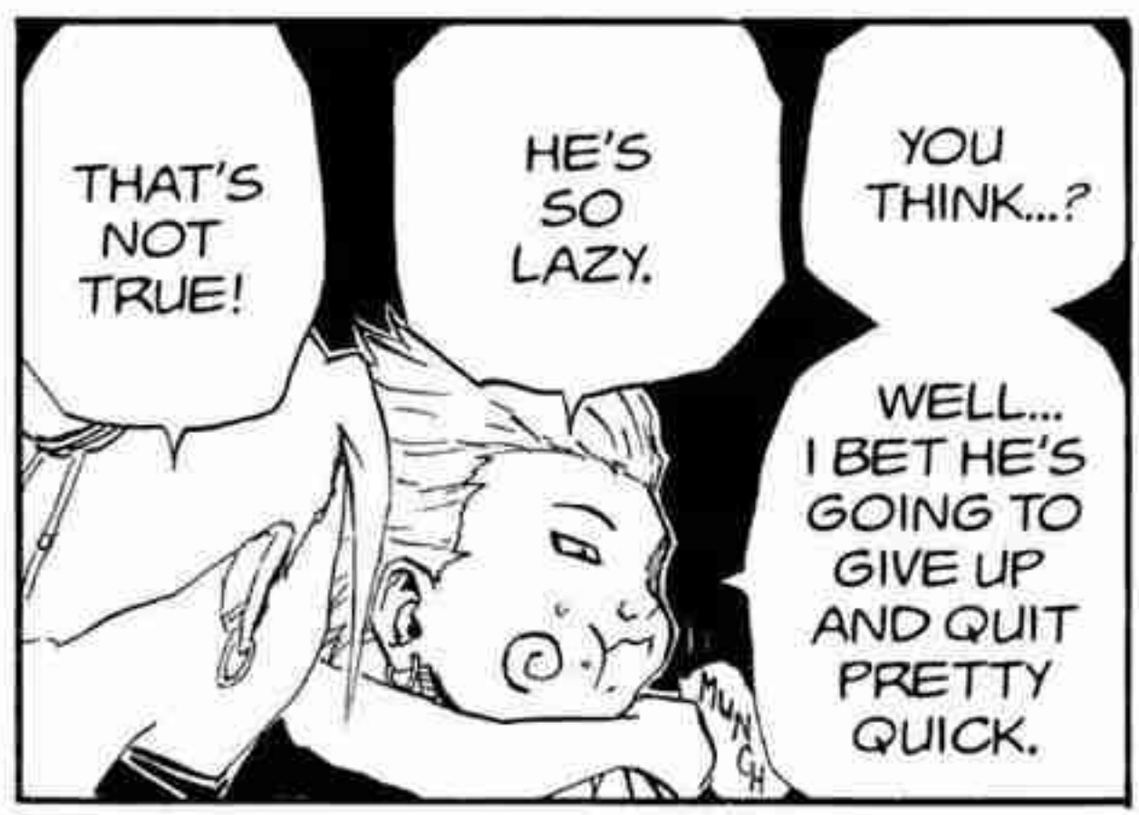
MAN... WHY DO I ALWAYS END UP FIGHTING GIRLS...?


THIS GUY USES SHADOWS IN HIS TECHNIQUES, RIGHT? HE'S PROBABLY TRYING TO LURE ME INTO THE WOODED AREA WHERE IT'S SHADY, BUT THERE'S NO WAY I'M FALLING FOR THAT!

HM? I THOUGHT SASUKE'S MATCH WAS NEXT...
BLINK
OH!
MUNCH MUNCH

GLOOM
MUTTER MUTTER...
SHH!
BETTER NOT BOTHER HER NOW...
MUNCH MUNCH

...IT'S KINDA WEIRD.
HUH... SHIKAMARU, FIGHTING IN THE FINALS...?
CRUNCH CRUNCH


THAT'S NOT TRUE!
HE'S SO LAZY.
YOU THINK...?
WELL... I BET HE'S GOING TO GIVE UP AND QUIT PRETTY QUICK.
MUNCH

SHIKAMARU MAY NOT BE A SUPERSTAR OR ANYTHING, BUT...
DON'T SAY THAT!
HE'S REALLY GOOD AT STRATEGY AND STUFF!
THAT'S WHY WE ALL MADE IT THROUGH THE FOREST AND GOT TO THE PRELIMS!

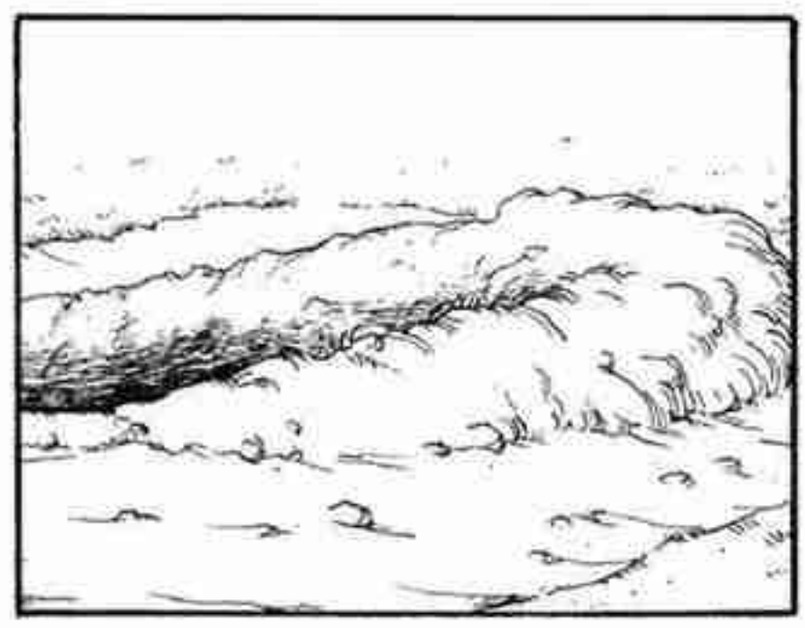
HE'S GOT A PASSIONATE SIDE TO HIM, TOO!
YOU MISSED HIS DRAMATIC LEAP DOWN TO THE ARENA FLOOR...
HE SEEMS UNUSUALLY AGGRESSIVE TODAY!

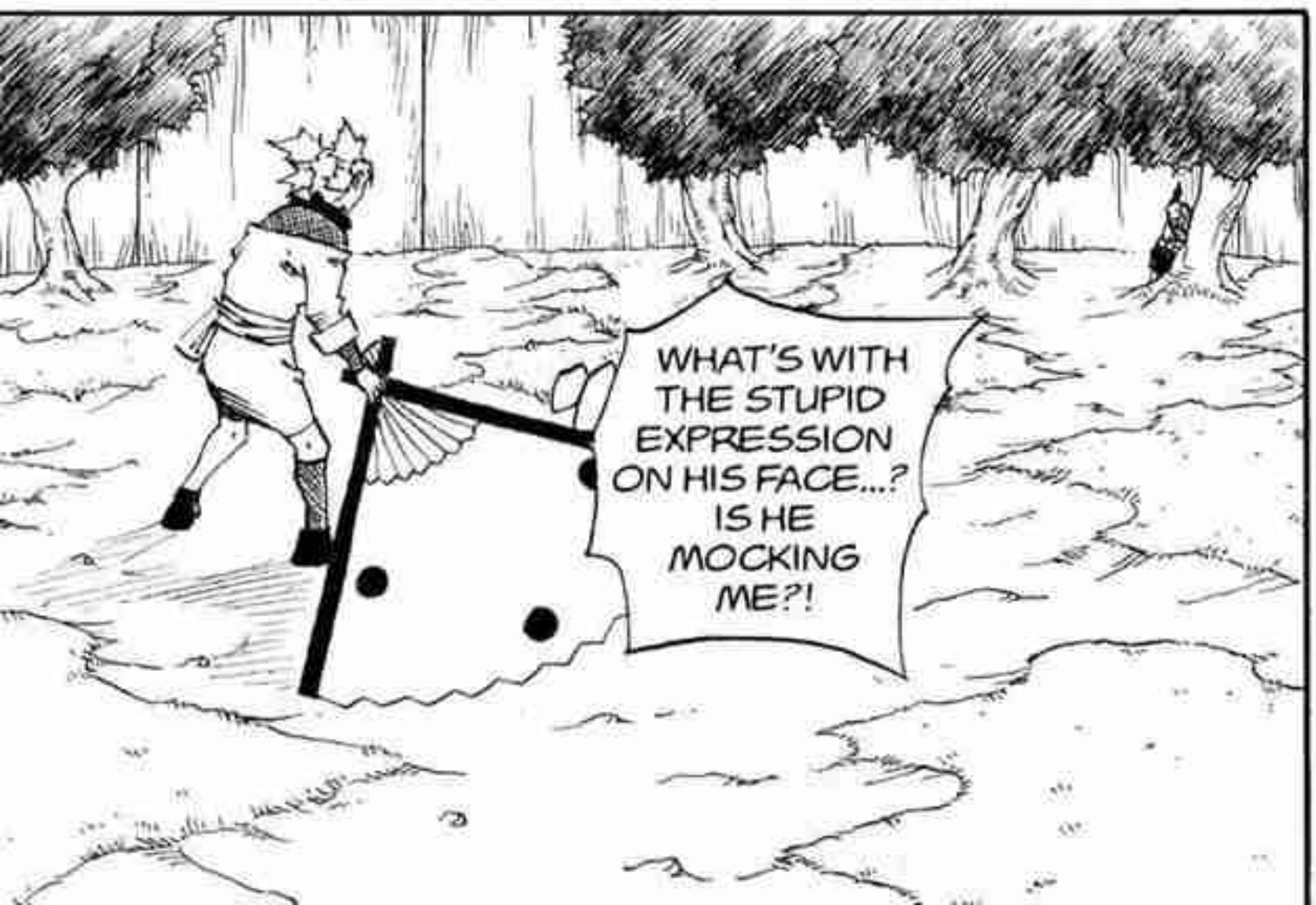
GO, SHIKAMARU!

DAZED
SIGH

THEY'RE SO FREE...

OH... HOW I ENVY THE CLOUDS!...





FWAP

NINJA ART... KAMAITACHI! WIND SCYTHE!!

KSHOOO

ACK!

THAT'S RIGHT... THIS IS THE MOVE SHE USED TO DESTROY MY WEAPONS ATTACK...

SLICE

SLICE

WHOA!!

READ THIS WAY

FWOOM

WHOOSH

!!

HOP

HOP

HOP

FEH!

FWOOM

IT'S SHRINKING...!!

SLIDE

!

QUIVER

TAK
... AHA...!

SKIDD
SLIDE

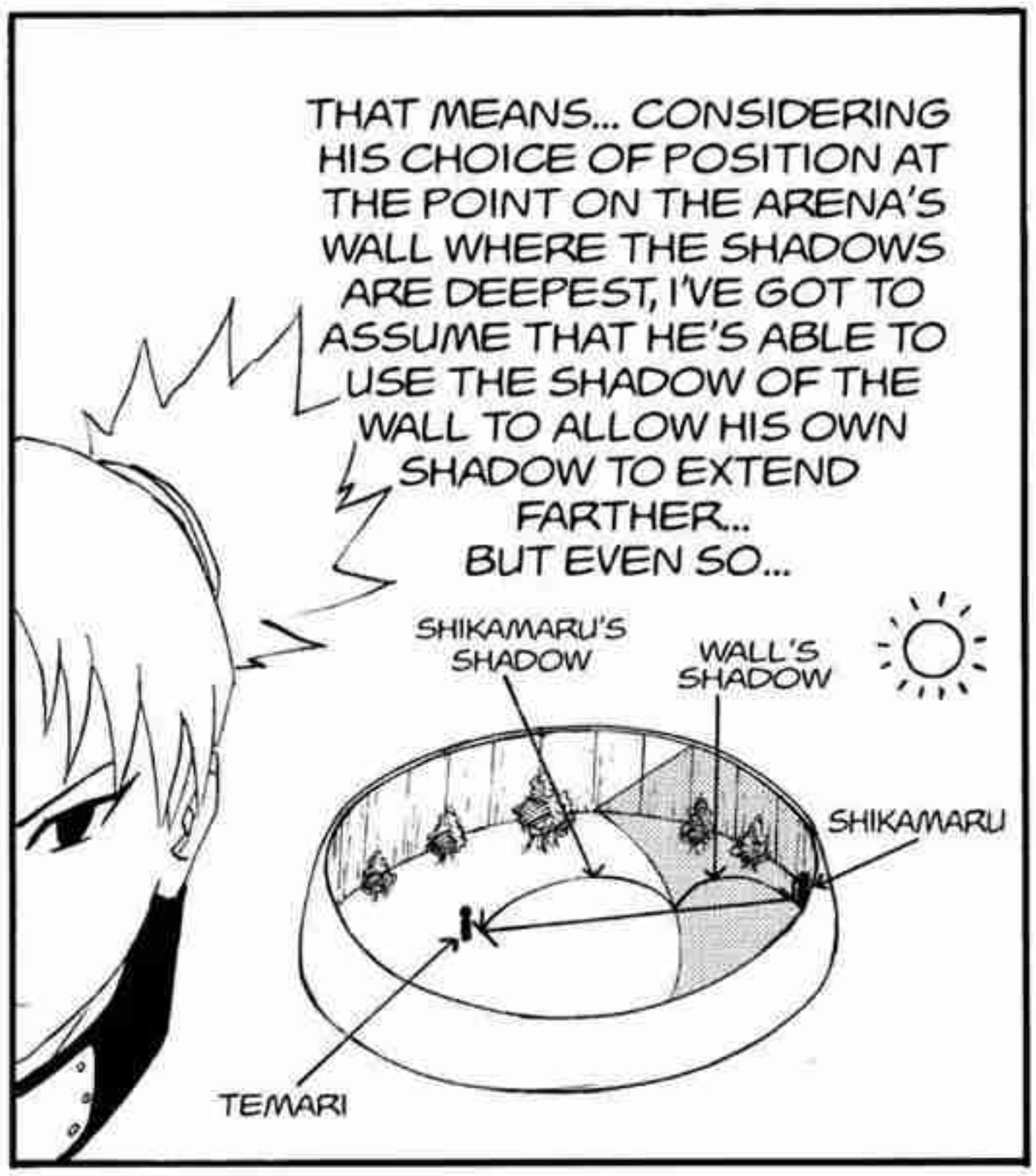
SHF
HUF
HUF

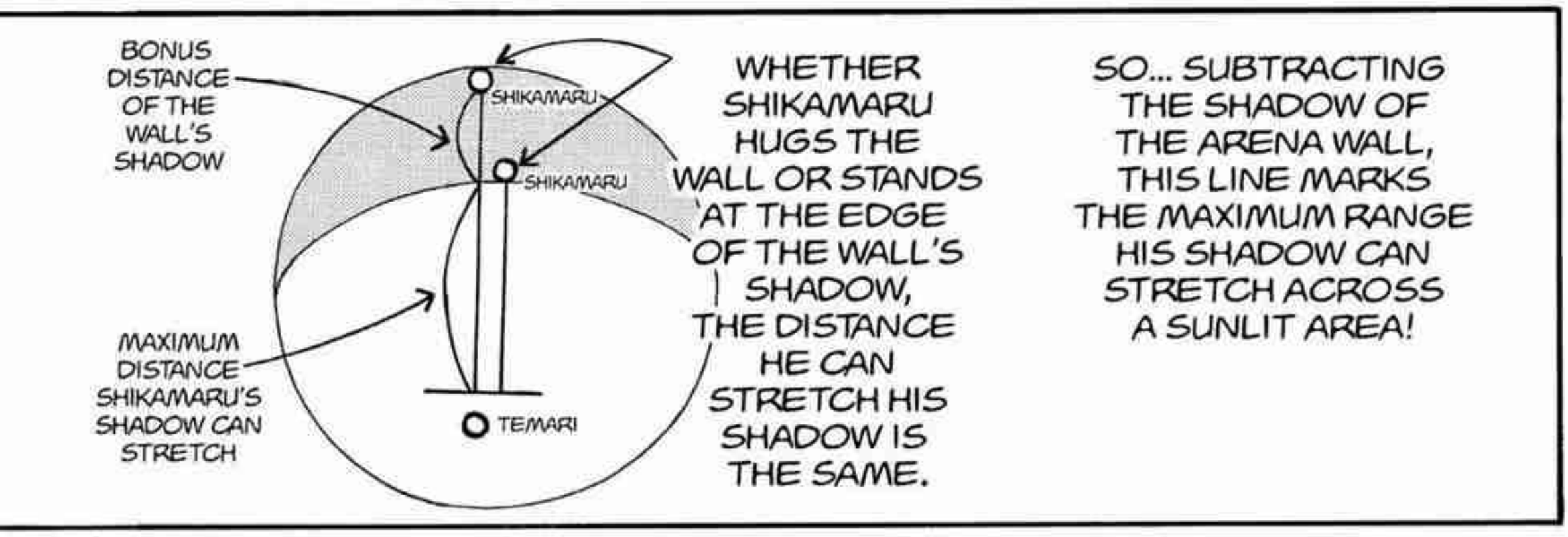
...YOU CAN'T INCREASE ITS OVERALL SIZE PAST ITS NORMAL SURFACE AREA... RIGHT?
HA HA... RIGHT!

EVEN THOUGH YOU CAN STRETCH YOUR SHADOW AT WILL...
HUF
HUF

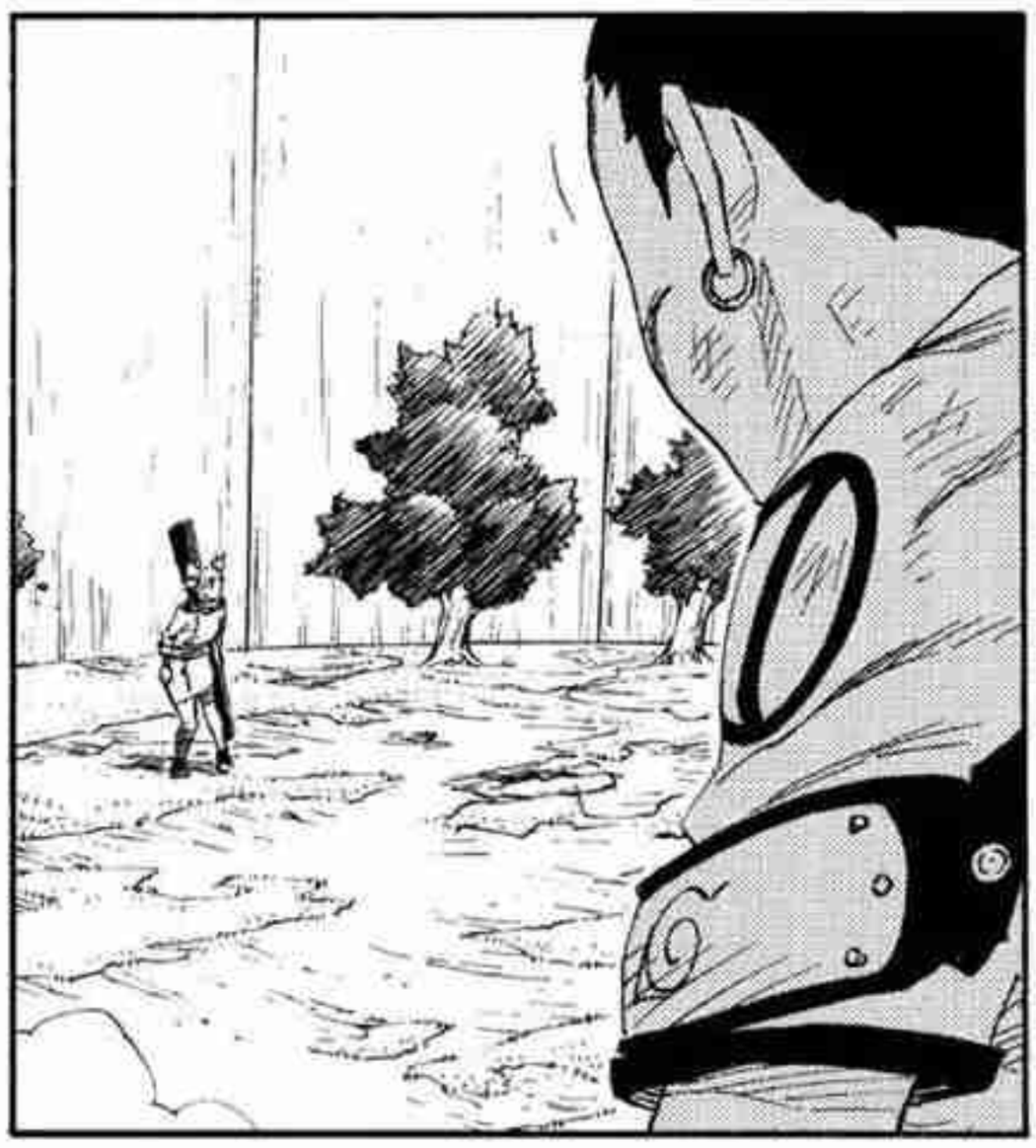
THE SHADOW POSSES-SION TECHNIQUE... REVEALED!
IT SEEMS THERE ARE SOME LIMITS TO HOW MUCH YOU CAN MANIPULATE THE SIZE AND SHAPE OF YOUR SHADOW, HM?

...THIS IS THE FARTHEST HIS SHADOW CAN REACH!
TUMP


THAT MEANS... CONSIDERING HIS CHOICE OF POSITION AT THE POINT ON THE ARENA'S WALL WHERE THE SHADOWS ARE DEEPEST, I'VE GOT TO ASSUME THAT HE'S ABLE TO USE THE SHADOW OF THE WALL TO ALLOW HIS OWN SHADOW TO EXTEND FARTHER... BUT EVEN SO...
SHIKAMARU'S SHADOW
WALL'S SHADOW
SHIKAMARU
TEMARI


BONUS DISTANCE OF THE WALL'S SHADOW
SHIKAMARU
SHIKAMARU
MAXIMUM DISTANCE SHIKAMARU'S SHADOW CAN STRETCH
TEMARI
WHETHER SHIKAMARU HUGS THE WALL OR STANDS AT THE EDGE OF THE WALL'S SHADOW, THE DISTANCE HE CAN STRETCH HIS SHADOW IS THE SAME.
SO... SUBTRACTING THE SHADOW OF THE ARENA WALL, THIS LINE MARKS THE MAXIMUM RANGE HIS SHADOW CAN STRETCH ACROSS A SUNLIT AREA!

TEMARI'S BETTER AT DISTANCE FIGHTING THAN CLOSE COMBAT ANYWAY... SHE'S PRACTICALLY WON.
SHE'S MEASURING THE DISTANCE USING HER FAN...
15 M, 32 CM...



!

HM!
!

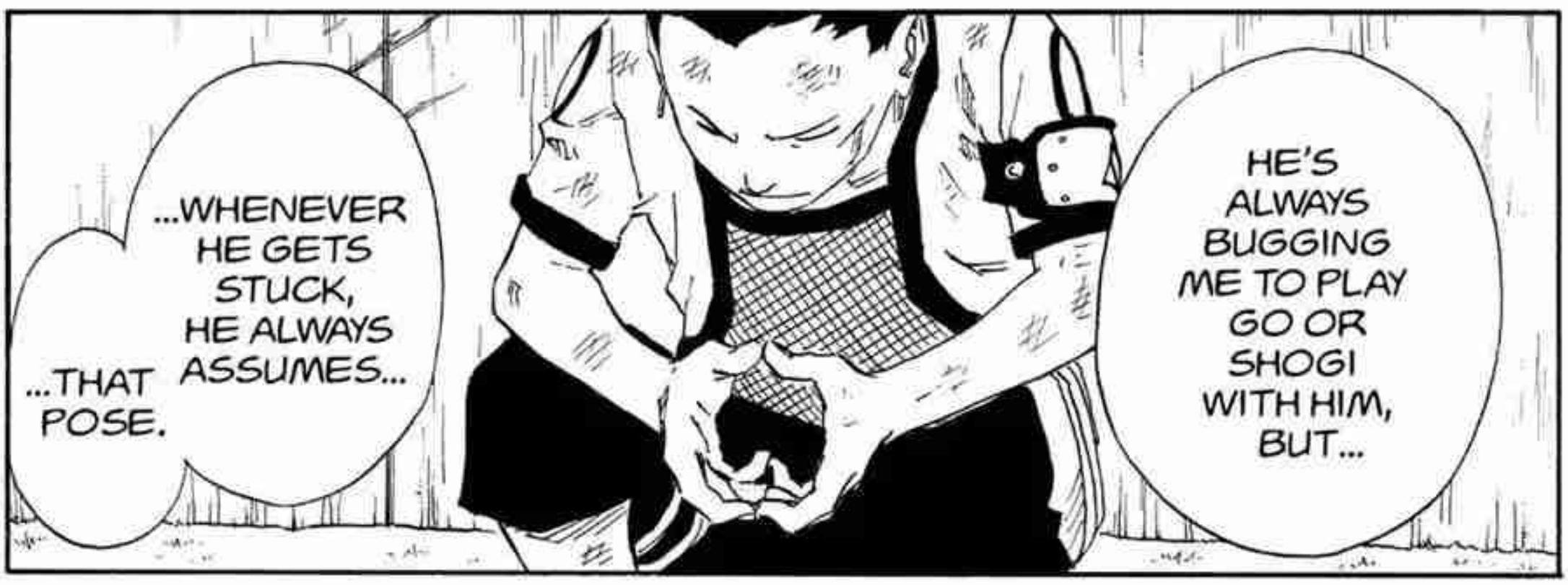
THAT'S NOT A SIGN.
WHAT IS THAT HAND SIGN...?
HUH...?

SQUAT

HE REALLY KNOWS HOW TO RELAX! HE ENJOYS LETTING TIME SLIP BY...
...JUST LIKE AN OLD GEEZER.

HABIT?

HUH?
IT'S JUST A HABIT OF HIS.


...WHENEVER HE GETS STUCK, HE ALWAYS ASSUMES...
...THAT POSE.
HE'S ALWAYS BUGGING ME TO PLAY GO OR SHOGI WITH HIM, BUT...

AND...
...I'VE NEVER BEATEN HIM... NOT EVEN ONCE.

?

HE'S PLOTTING HIS STRATEGY!

BUT... WAIT A MINUTE! I REMEMBER REVIEWING HIS GRADES BACK WHEN WE WERE DIVIDING UP THE GENIN INTO TEAMS...
OH REALLY?
...SHIKAMARU'S MARKS WERE AS BAD AS NARUTO'S!

...WERE USED BY MILITARY ADVISORS TO PLAN THEIR STRATEGIES.
PEOPLE SAY THAT BEFORE THEY BECAME PLAYTHINGS, THOSE SAME GAME PIECES...
SO I GUESS SHIKAMARU WOULD MAKE A FIRST-RATE MILITARY ADVISOR!

THIS IS A REAL BATTLE... NOT A GAME! GEEZ...
STRATEGY ...?

...AND HE TOLD ME HE ALWAYS DOZED OFF DURING EXAMS.
BACK AT THE ACADEMY, HE WAS TOO LAZY TO EVEN MOVE HIS PENCIL TO TAKE NOTES...

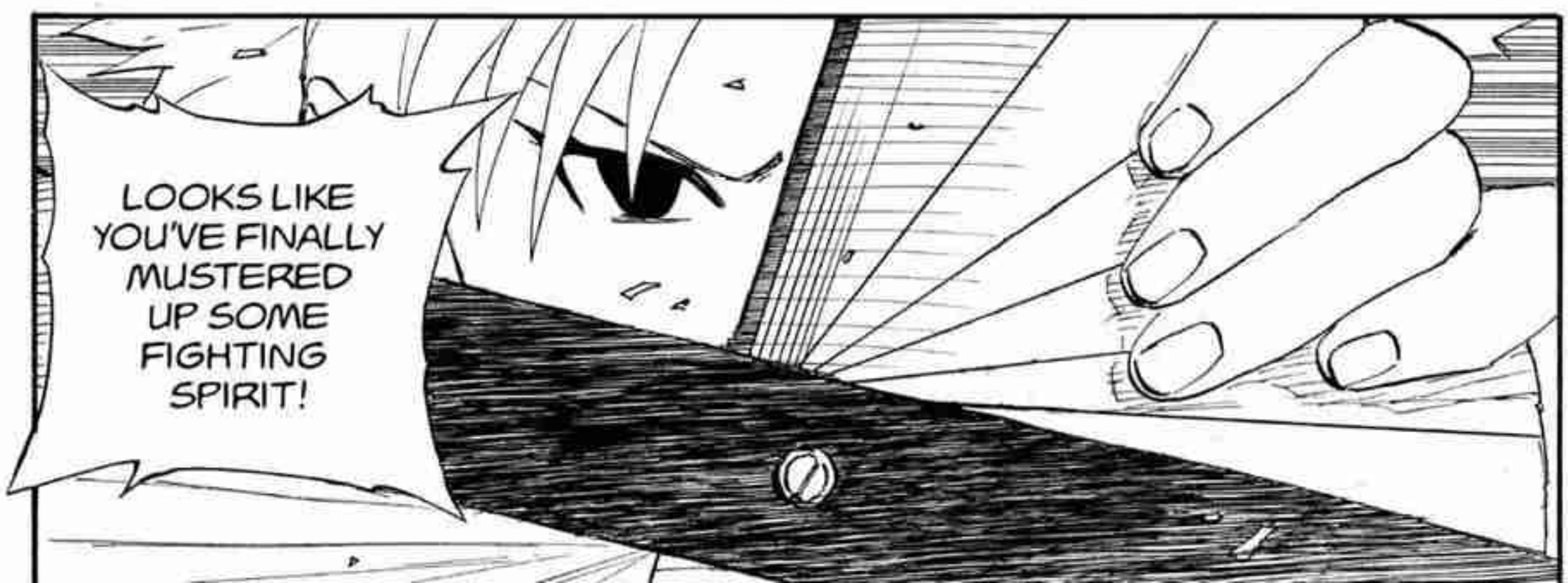
I KIND OF DID IT JUST TO MESS WITH HIM, BUT...
...I GAVE HIM AN I.Q. TEST. I CONVINCED HIM IT WAS JUST ANOTHER PUZZLE.
...I WAS SO BAFFLED BY HIS PROFICIENCY AT STRATEGY GAMES THAT I...
ONE TIME...

...SO...
WHAT WAS HIS SCORE...?

HIS I.Q. IS OVER 200... HE'S A FREAKIN' GENIUS!

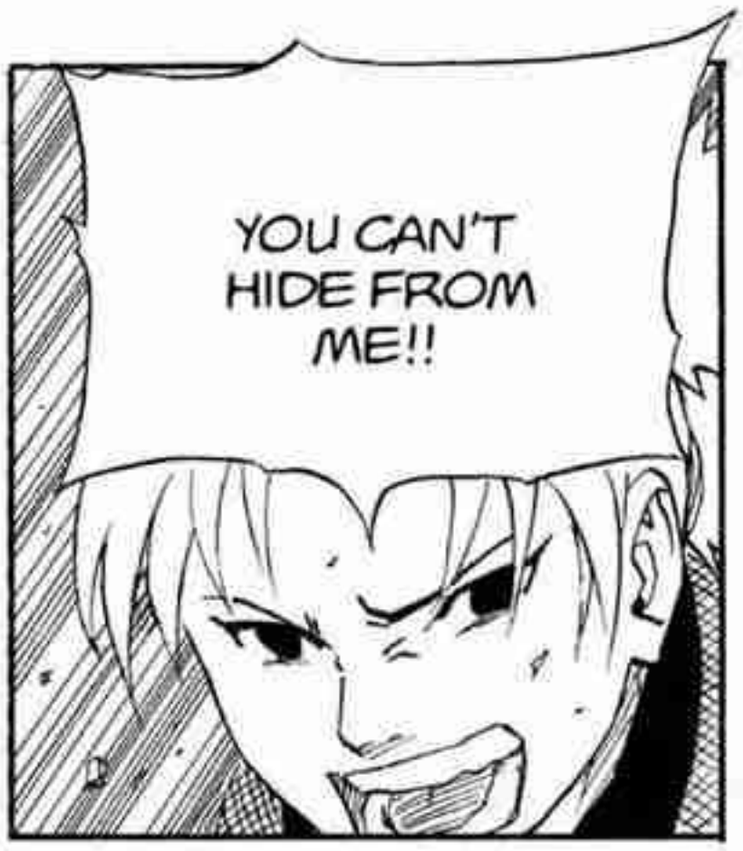
HE'S A SHARP ONE, ALL RIGHT!

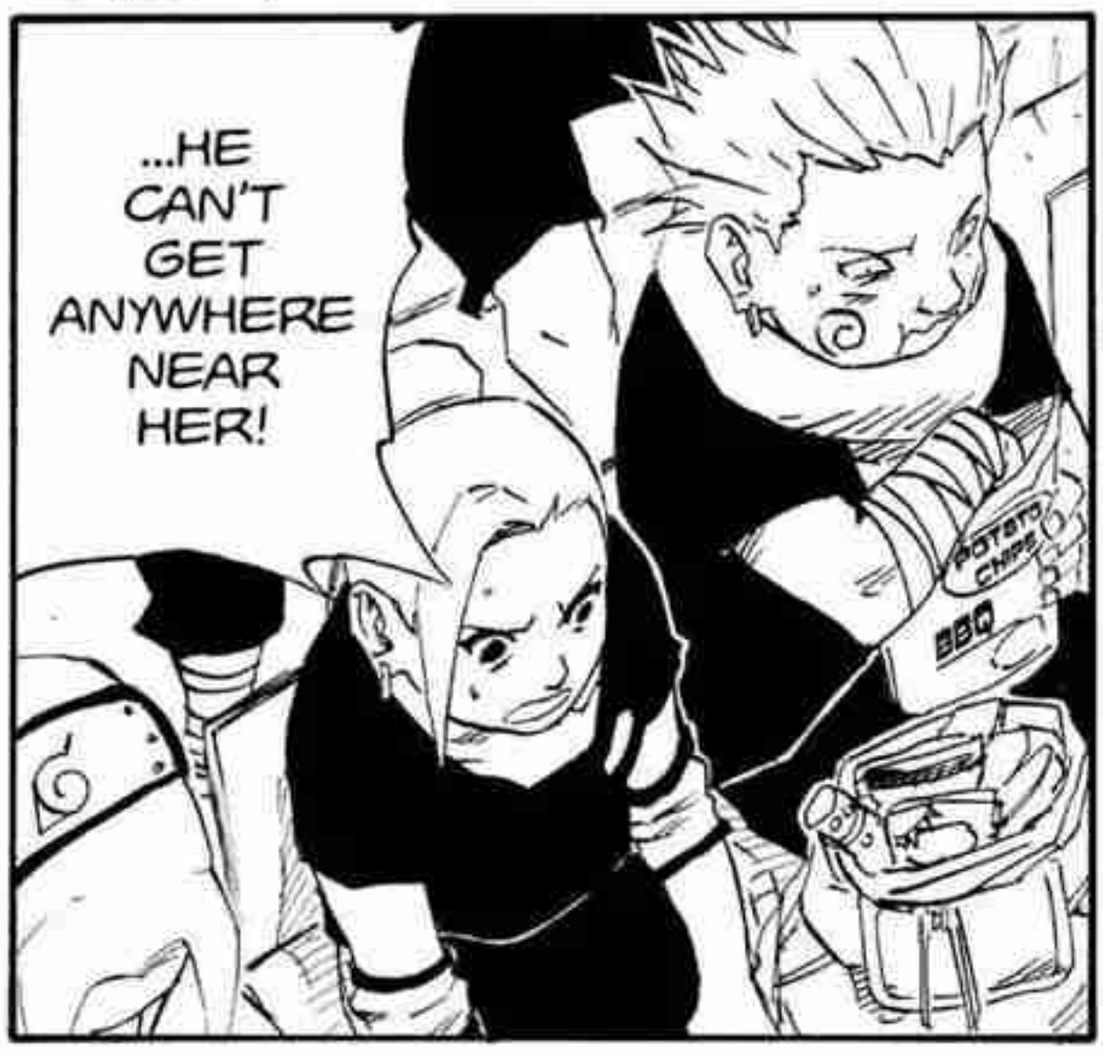
SHF



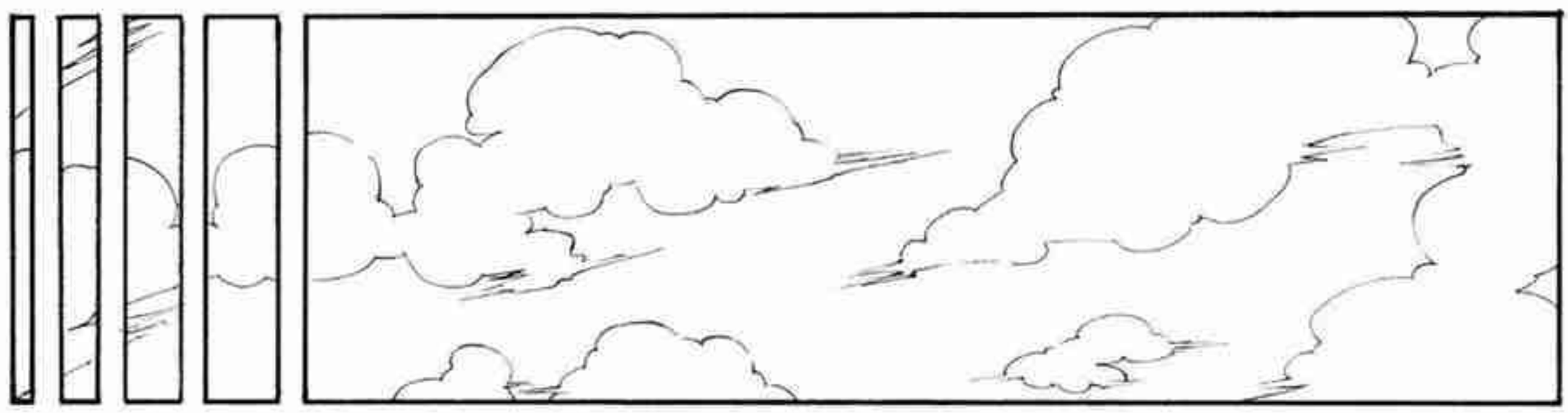
WHOOSH

KAMAITACHI NO JUTSU! WIND SCYTHE TECHNIQUE!!




...HE CAN'T GET ANYWHERE NEAR HER!
POTATO CHIPS
BBQ

I...I THINK SO... I'M ALMOST POSITIVE!
DOES HE REALLY HAVE A STRATEGY...?!



HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF

FWAP
HOW LONG ARE YOU GOING TO KEEP RUNNING AROUND?! WILL YOU QUIT IT ALREADY?!
HUF
HUF

BBQ
CRUNCH
CRUNCH
POTATO CHIPS
BBQ
LOW SALT

FWING
!!

WHOOSH

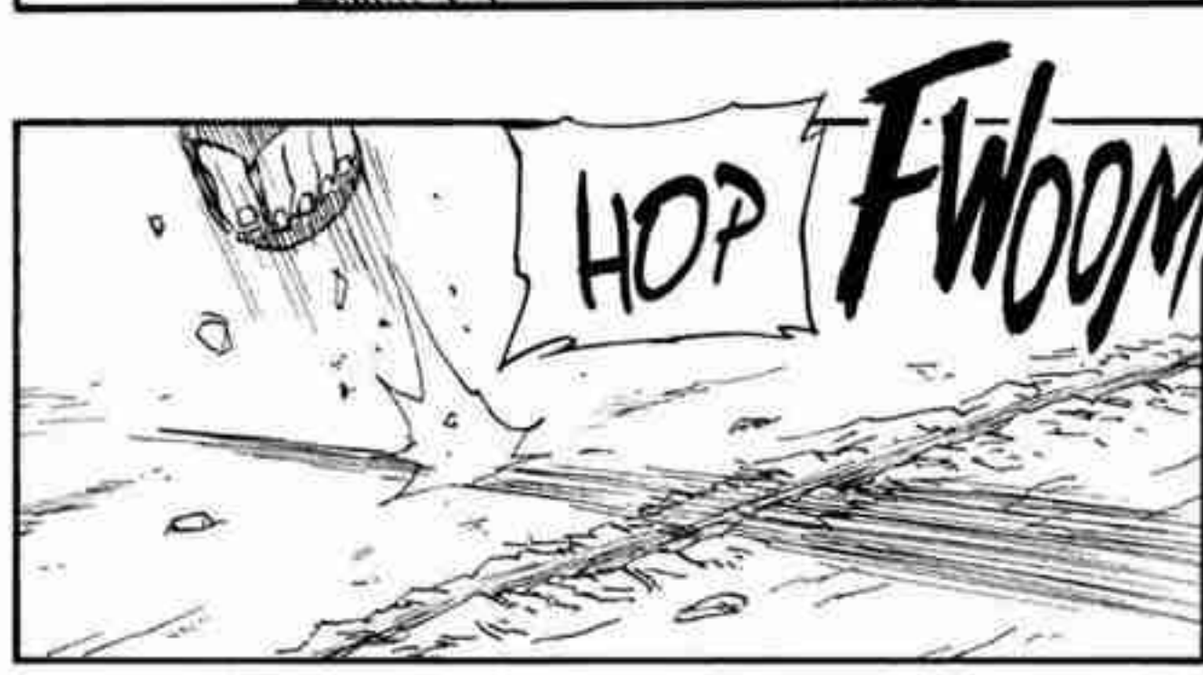
!!
THOK
HOP

!!
FWOOM
!

FWAP
TINK
SKIDD
UGH...!

...SHOOT!!
NO... WAIT!

SNAP
HEH... IT'S USELESS! AS LONG AS I STAY BEHIND THIS LINE, YOU CAN'T CATCH ME...
FWOOM


HOP
FWOOM

HUF
QUIVER
HUF
HUF

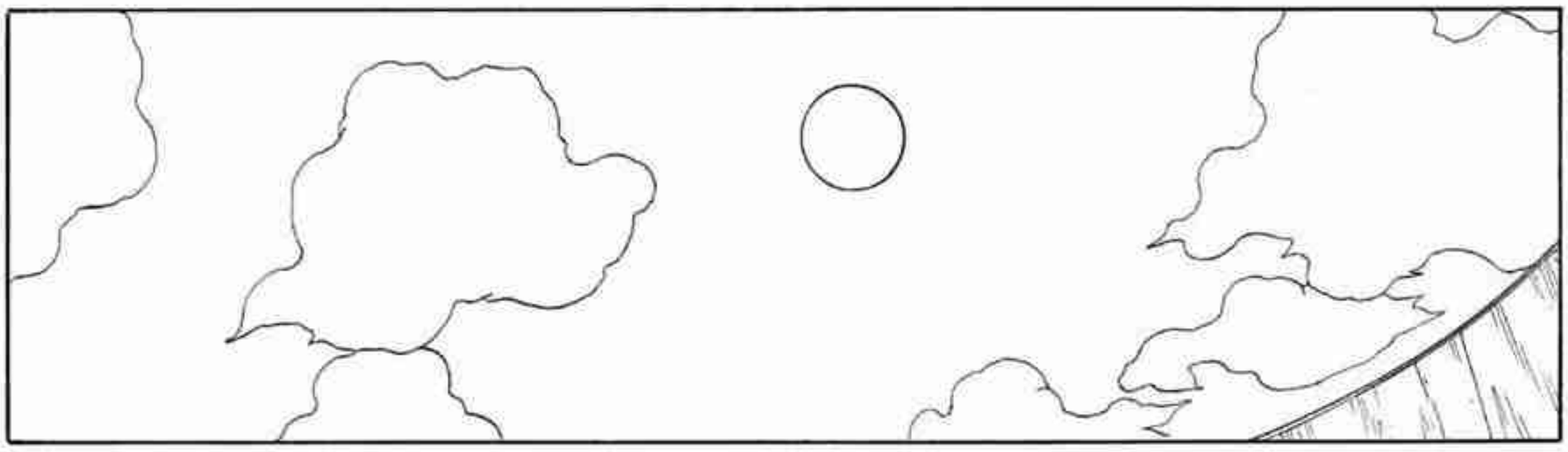
SKIDDD
UGH...!
FWOOOM

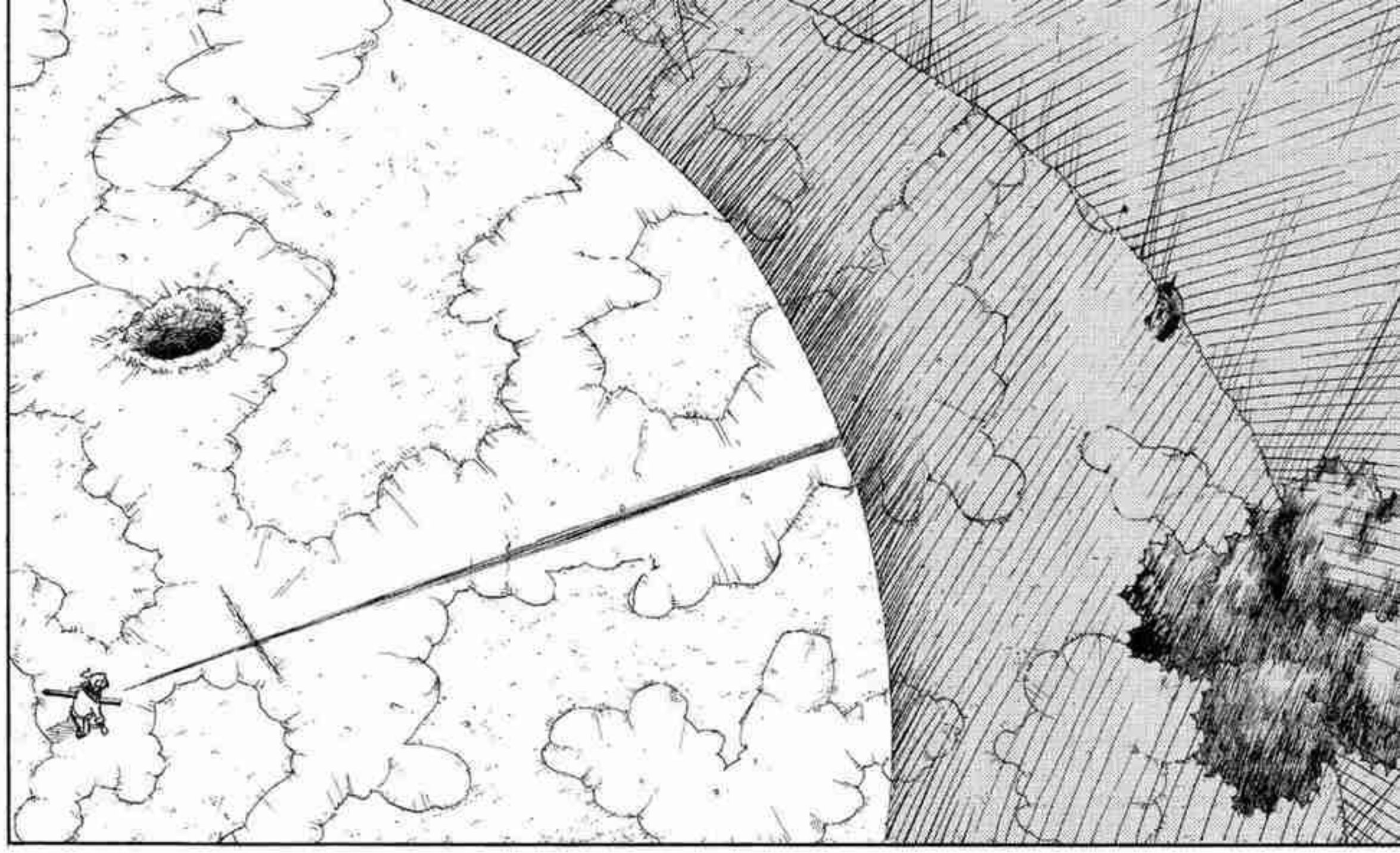
...SO THAT THE AREA OF THE WALL'S SHADOW AND OF YOUR OWN SHADOW WOULD INCREASE!
I GET IT... YOU WERE BUYING TIME, WAITING FOR THE SUN TO DROP...
NICELY DONE...

HMPH!
BECAUSE AS THE DAY LENGTHENS, SO DO SHADOWS...

CELEBRATE!! SECOND ANNIVERSARY!!
祝!! 2周年!!
KISHIMOTO-SAN!
HAPPY BIRTHDAY AND HAPPY *NARUTO* SECOND ANNIVERSARY!!
PLEASE KEEP UP THE GOOD ENERGY AND GOOD WORK!!!
岸本さん! 誕生日 & 「NARUTO」
連載2周年 おめでとー!!
これからも気合いれて頑張って!!!
H.13 11.8. 河原武美
KAWAHARA TAKEMI

Number 108: A Plot Within a Plot...?!





I'M DEFINITELY SAFE HERE... FOR SURE.
TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE SUN'S CURRENT POSITION AND HIS LAST MAXIMUM ATTACK DISTANCE...

BRILLIANT...

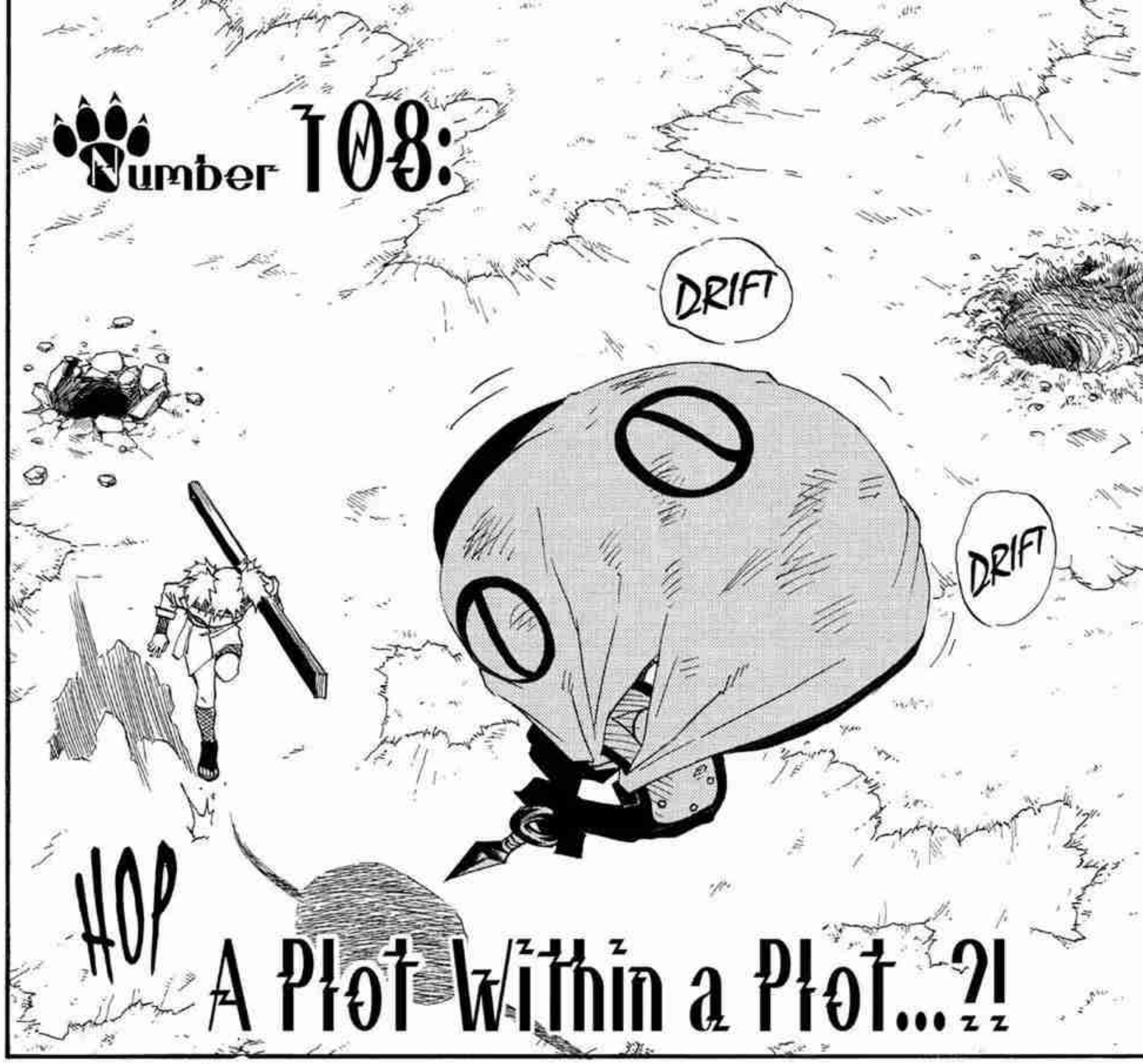
!

TEMARI! LOOK UP!!
!!

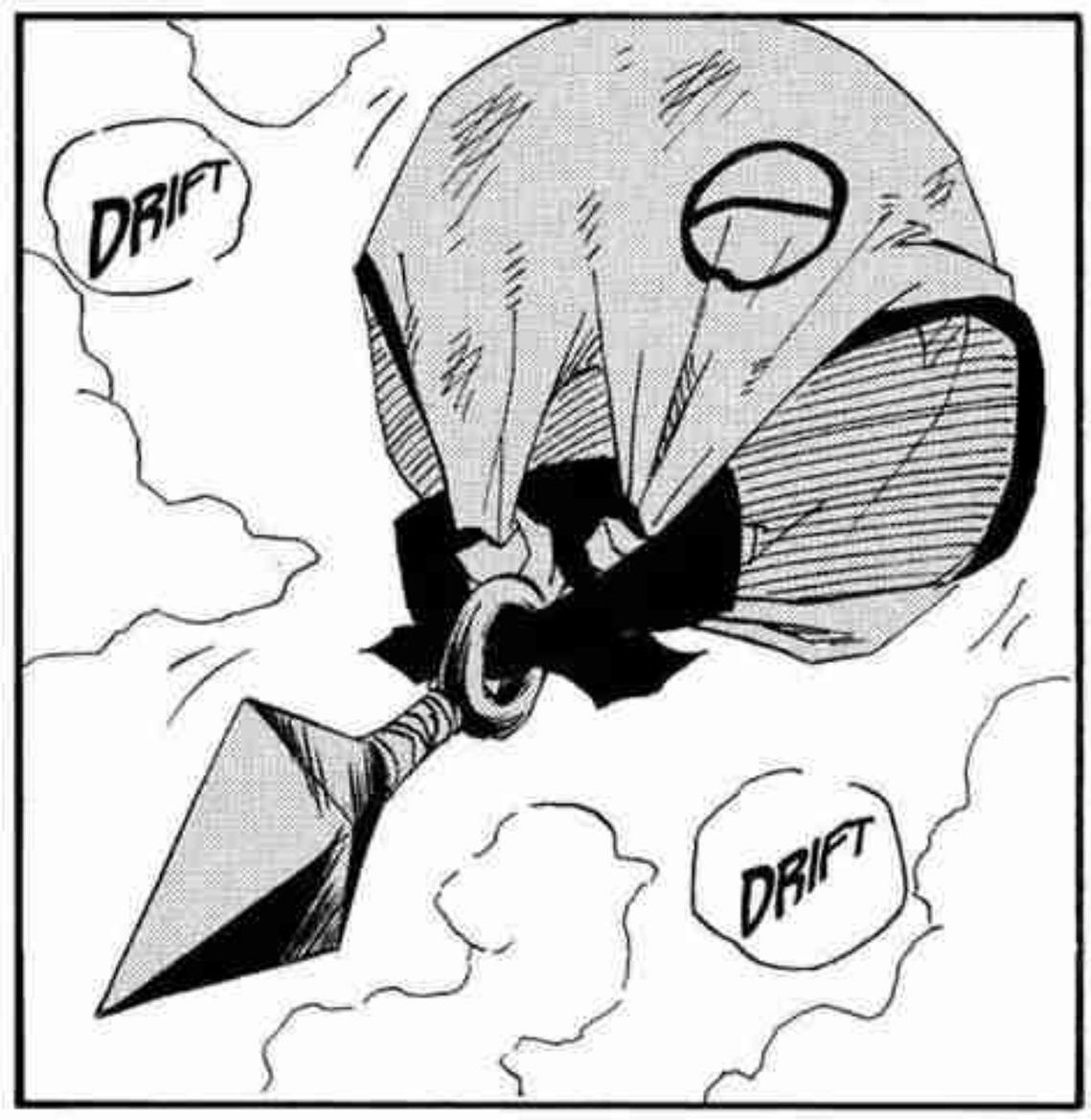
!

READ THIS WAY
FWM
...?!
WHAT THE...?!
NO WAY!
!
FWOM
WHOOSH
!!
UGH...
HOP
FWOOM

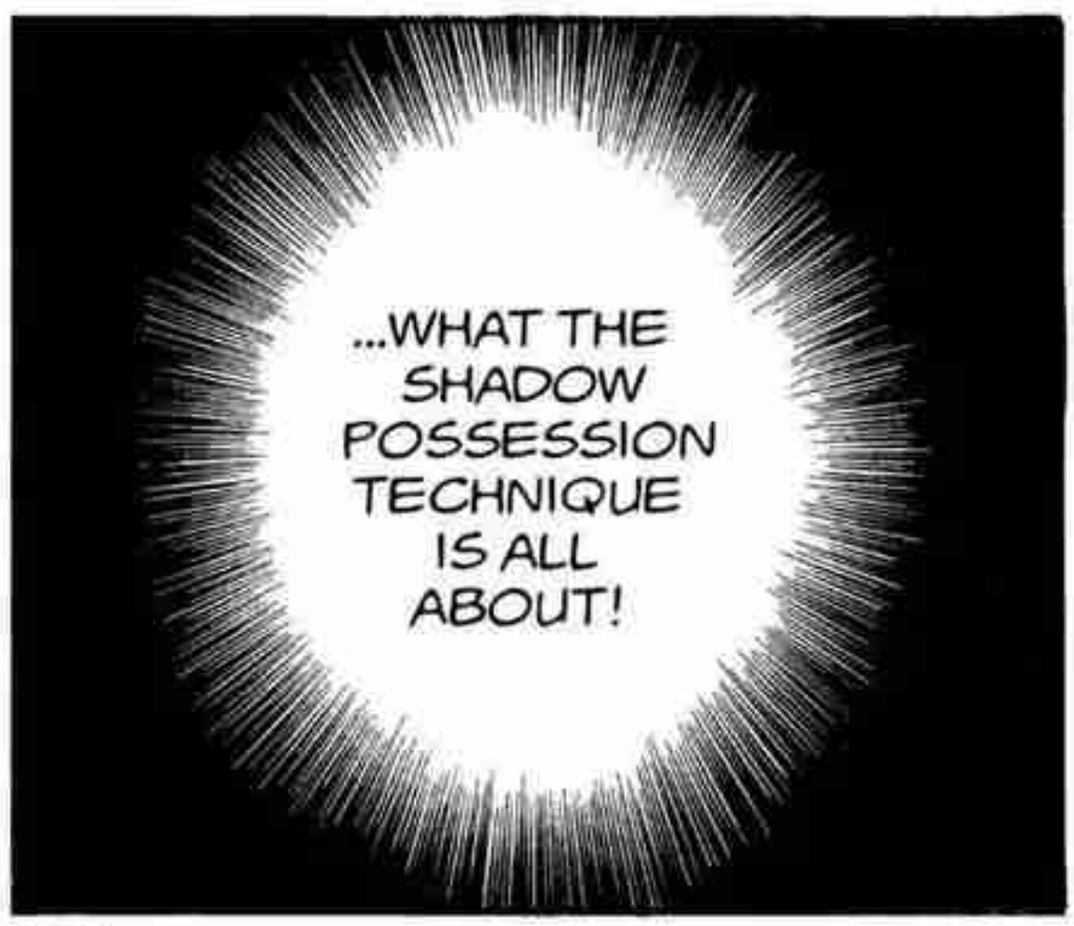
Number 108: A Plot Within a Plot...?!



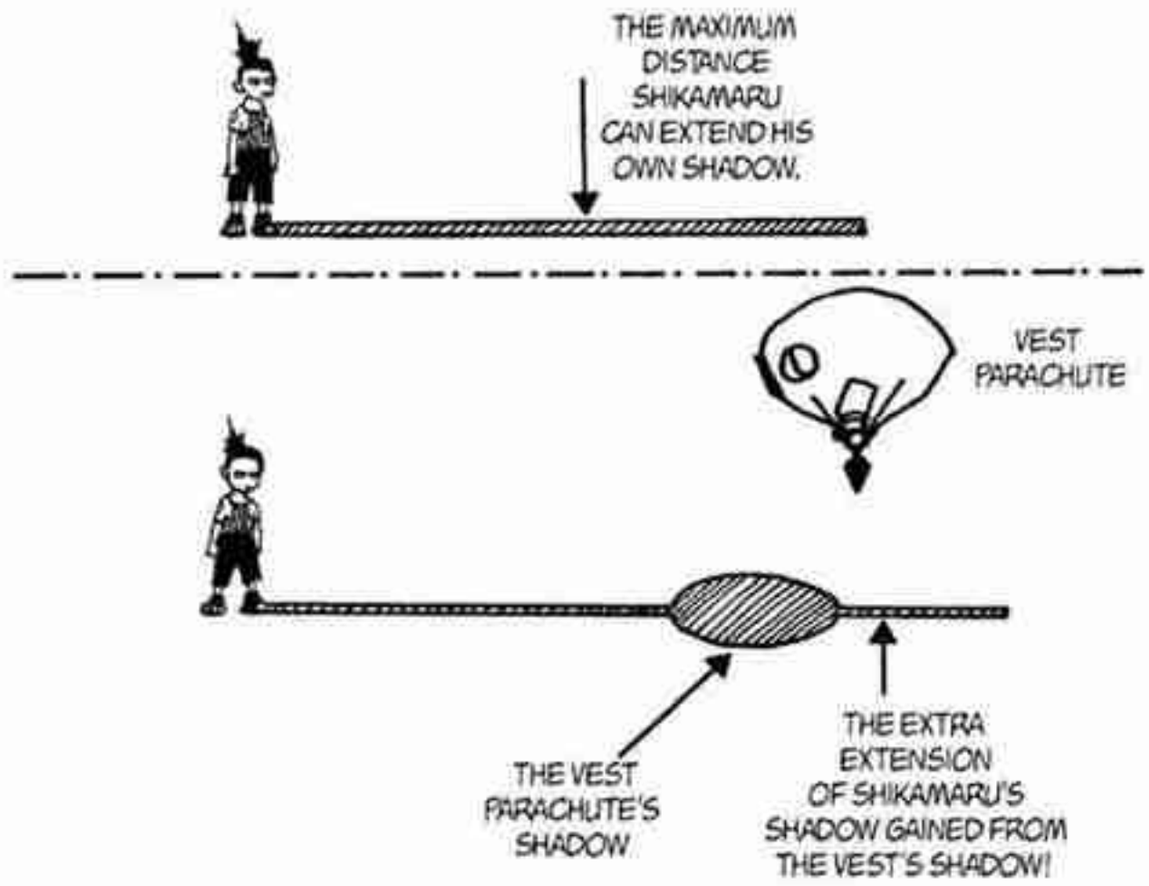
...TO GIVE HIMSELF MORE SHADOWS TO WORK WITH...!
I NEVER GUESSED HE'D USE HIS VEST AS A PARACHUTE...


DRIFT
DRIFT

AND NOW... IF I FOCUS ON THE PARACHUTE, I'LL BE DISTRACTED FROM HIS GROUND ATTACKS!!
THIS GUY IS REALLY SOMETHING! WITH HIS SHADOW ATTACKS, HE FORCED ME TO KEEP MY ATTENTION ON THE GROUND... AND KEPT ME FROM NOTICING THE PARACHUTE!


...WHAT THE SHADOW POSSESSION TECHNIQUE IS ALL ABOUT!

WHAT A NASTY TACTIC...
BUT NOW IT'S CRYSTAL CLEAR...



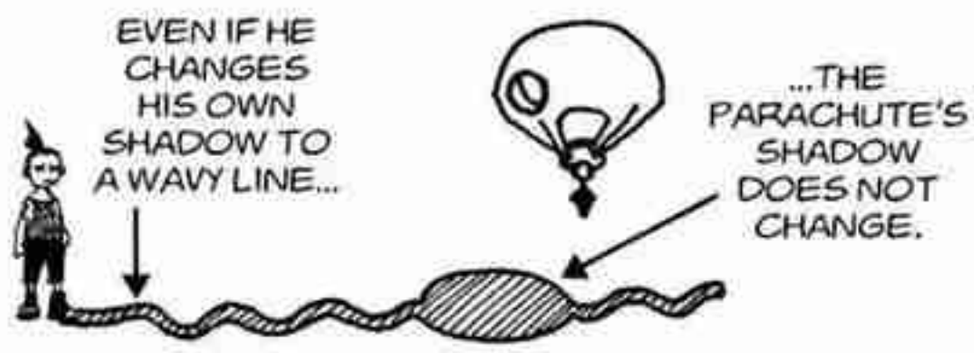
SHIKAMARU CAN USE HIS OWN SHADOW AND ANY OTHER AVAILABLE SHADOWS IN HIS ATTACK! IN OTHER WORDS...

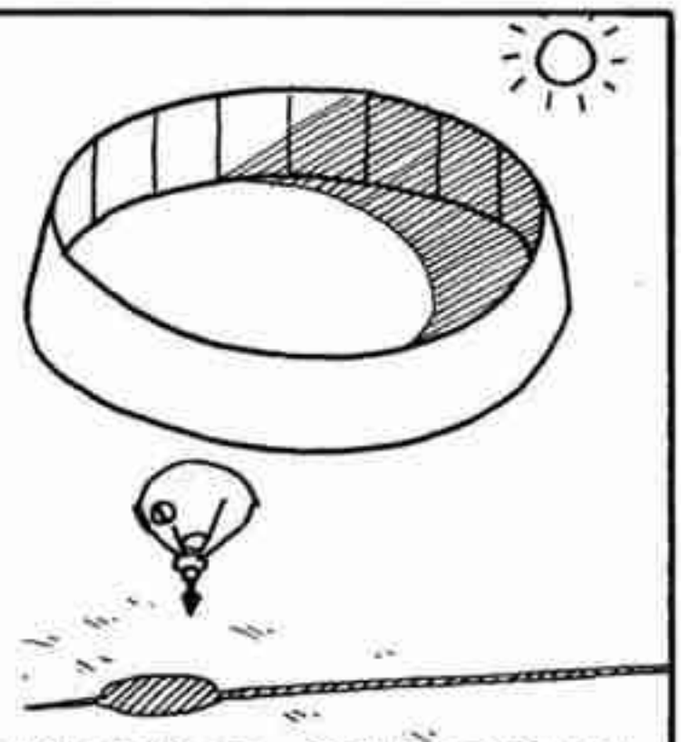
(1) HE CAN UTILIZE ANY OTHER SHADOWS (IN THIS CASE, THE PARACHUTE'S SHADOW) ALONG THE STRAIGHT LINE BETWEEN HIM AND HIS TARGET.

(2) HE CAN EXTEND HIS OWN SHADOW THE ADDITIONAL LENGTH PROVIDED BY THE OTHER SHADOW.

(3) SHIKAMARU CANNOT FREELY CHANGE THE SHAPE OF SHADOWS OTHER THAN HIS OWN.

THEREFORE, I MUST CONCLUDE THAT...



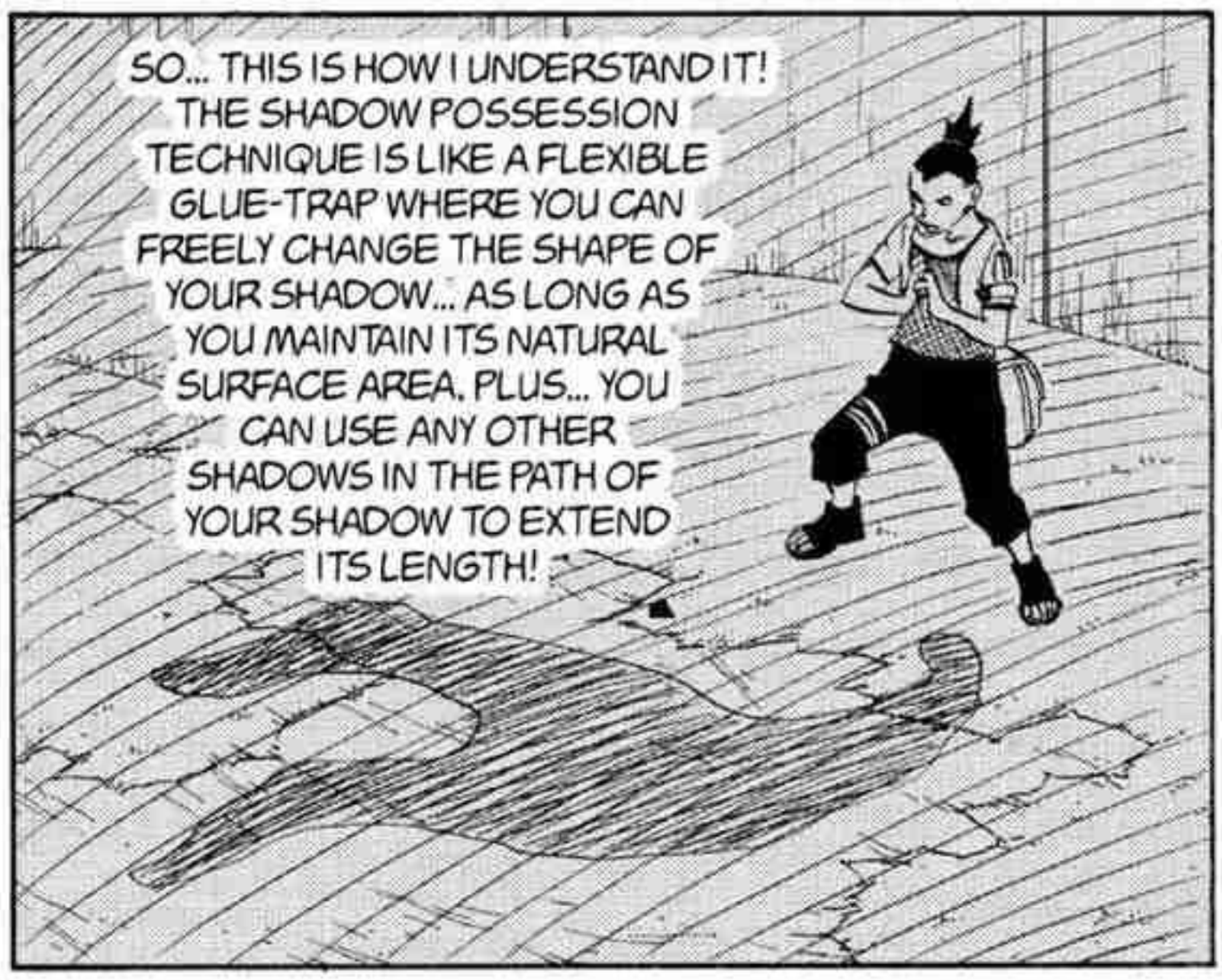


HOWEVER... OTHER THAN THE CHANGES CAUSED BY THE MOVEMENT OF THE SUN, THE SHAPE OF BOTH THE WALL'S AND THE VEST'S SHADOWS HAVE BEEN FIXED.

AND FROM OBSERVING HIS PREVIOUS BATTLES...

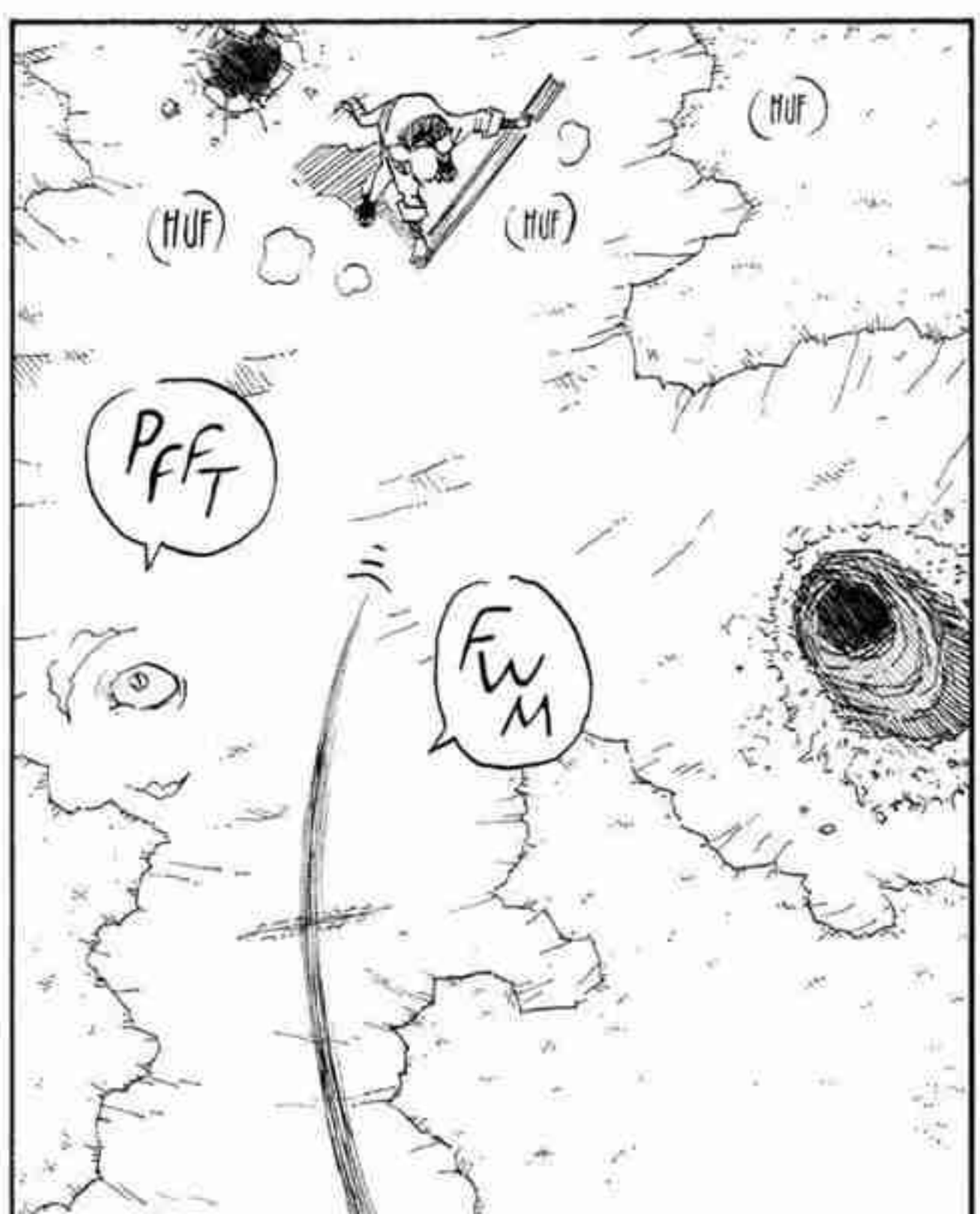
(4) ONLY WHEN HE HAS CAPTURED HIS TARGET'S SHADOW WITH **HIS OWN SHADOW** CAN HE STOP HIS TARGET'S MOVEMENTS!

LEAP
SNAP!


SO... THIS IS HOW I UNDERSTAND IT! THE SHADOW POSSESSION TECHNIQUE IS LIKE A FLEXIBLE GLUE-TRAP WHERE YOU CAN FREELY CHANGE THE SHAPE OF YOUR SHADOW... AS LONG AS YOU MAINTAIN ITS NATURAL SURFACE AREA. PLUS... YOU CAN USE ANY OTHER SHADOWS IN THE PATH OF YOUR SHADOW TO EXTEND ITS LENGTH!

FWAP

FWOOM

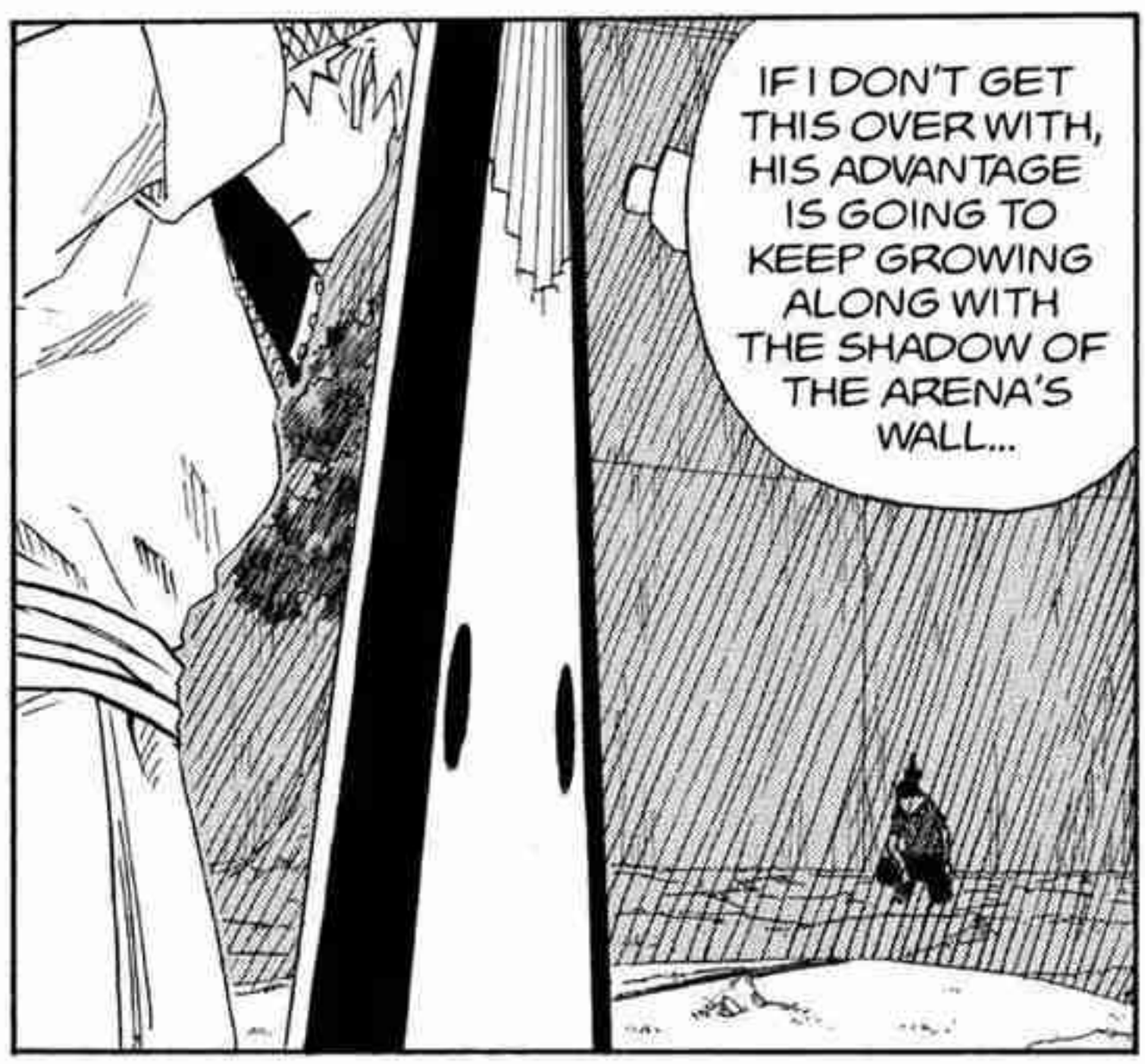

(HUF)
(HUF)
(HUF)
PFFT
FWM

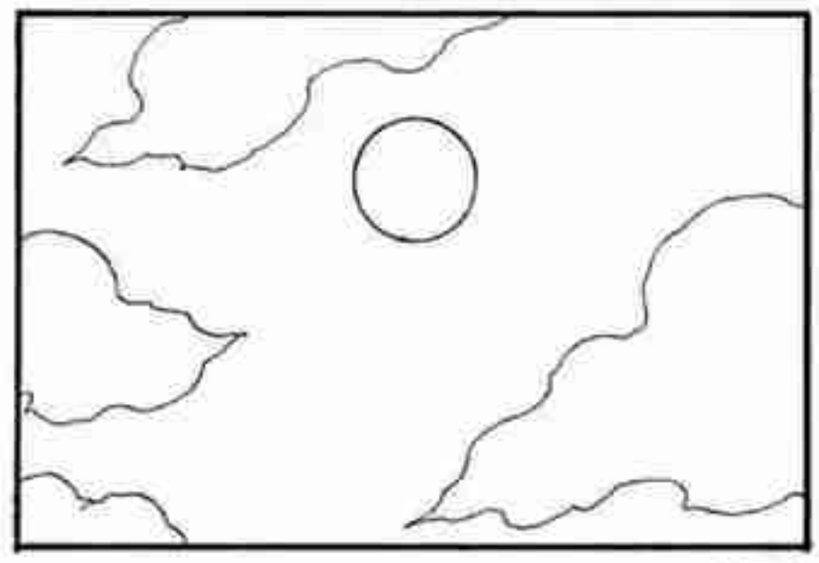
SHF

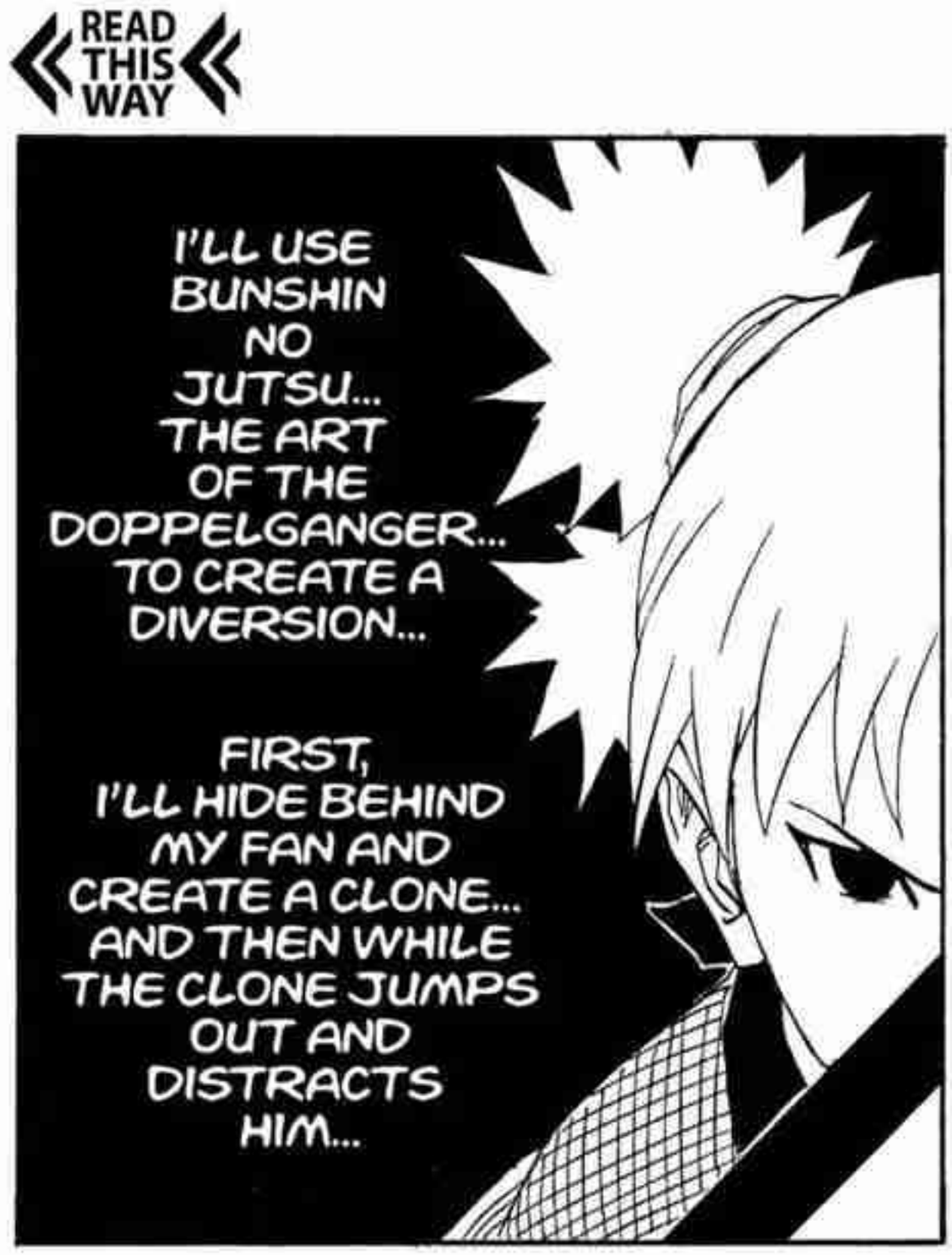
SNEER

YOU MANAGED TO DODGE ME AGAIN...?

SHE'S ANALYZING AND ANTICIPATING HIS ATTACKS...
HMM! THIS GIRL'S A PRETTY GOOD STRATEGIST, TOO...
HE'S GOING TOO EASY ON HER...


IF I DON'T GET THIS OVER WITH, HIS ADVANTAGE IS GOING TO KEEP GROWING ALONG WITH THE SHADOW OF THE ARENA'S WALL...




READ THIS WAY
I'LL USE BUNSHIN NO JUTSU... THE ART OF THE DOPPELGANGER... TO CREATE A DIVERSION...
FIRST, I'LL HIDE BEHIND MY FAN AND CREATE A CLONE... AND THEN WHILE THE CLONE JUMPS OUT AND DISTRACTS HIM...

MY NEXT MOVE WILL END THIS!
THWAK

...I'LL BUILD UP MY CHAKRA TO THE MAXIMUM LEVEL AND SLAUGHTER HIM WITH A FULL-FORCE WIND SCYTHE ATTACK!

PEEK
NOW... WHERE IS HIS SHADOW...?

HERE I GO...!
FWOOM

FLW AP

BUNSHIN NO...!

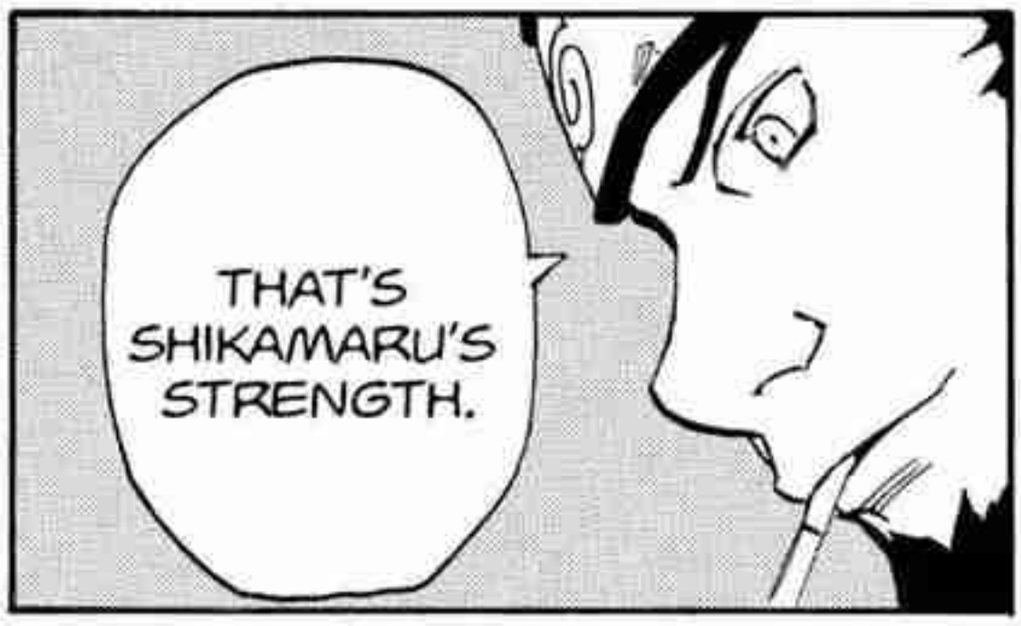
INITIATING ATTACK!

...I'M... FROZEN...?!
TWITCH
...N...NO WAY...
SHIVER
TWITCH
TWITCH

SHM

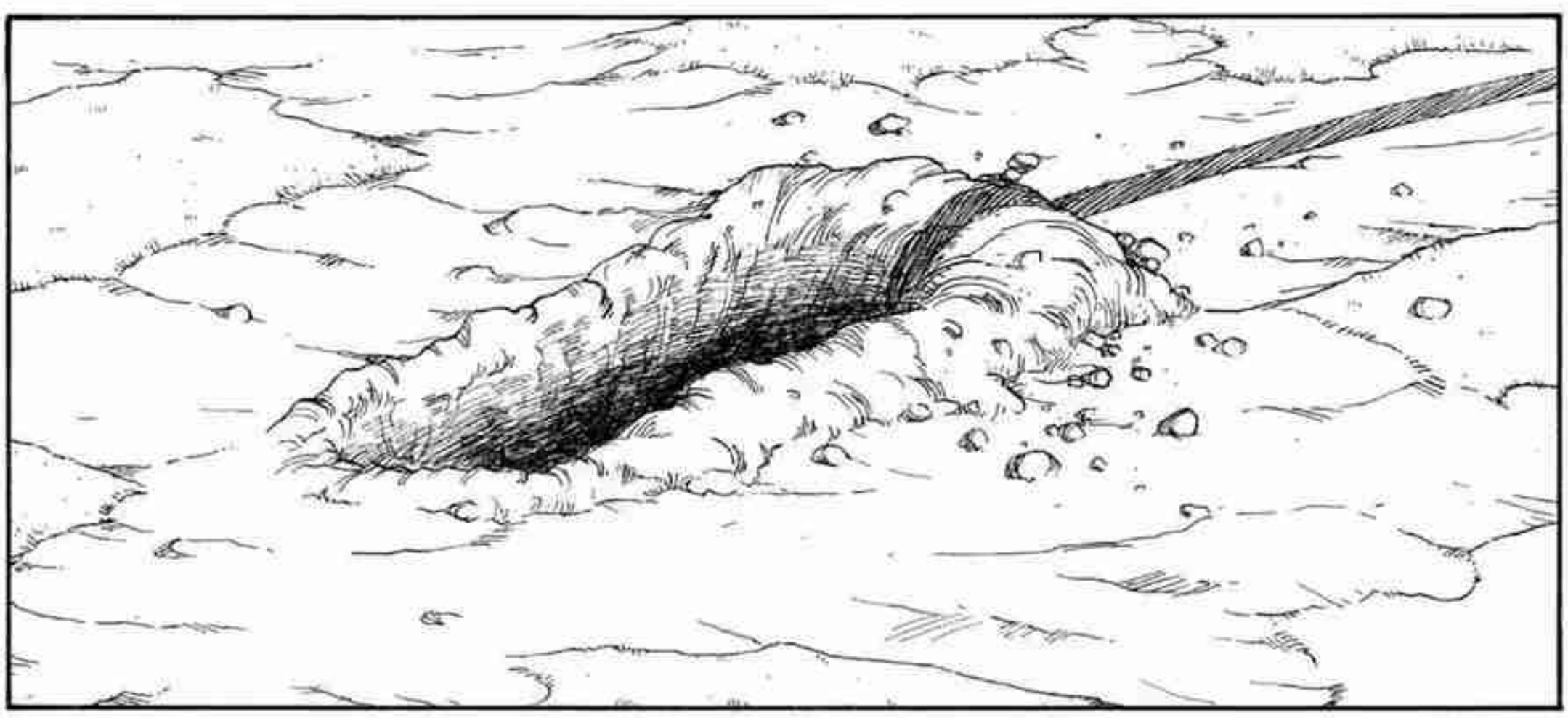
...THE SHADOW POSSESSION TECHNIQUE IS A SUCCESS!

AH... FINALLY...


THAT'S SHIKAMARU'S STRENGTH.

...HOW MANY STEPS AHEAD IS HE THINKING?!
THAT BOY...

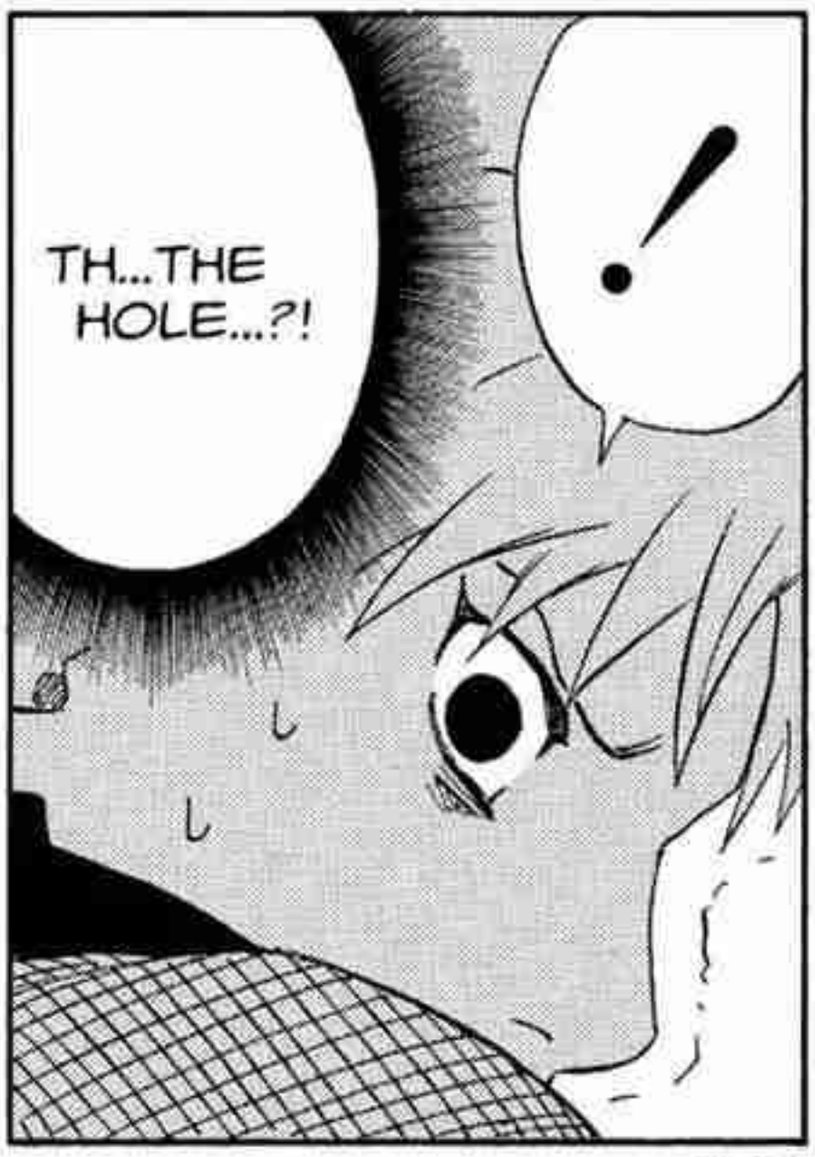
YOUR SHADOW SHOULDN'T BE ABLE TO REACH THIS FAR! BESIDES... I CAN SEE THE END OF IT...
WHY CAN'T I MOVE?!
TWITCH
TWITCH



!!

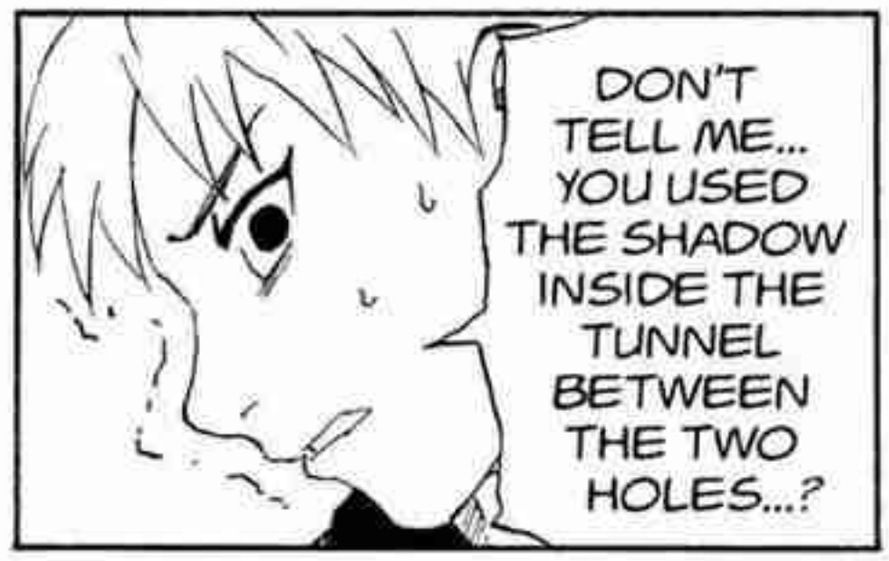
TWST
I'LL LET YOU LOOK BEHIND YOU...

ON-AG

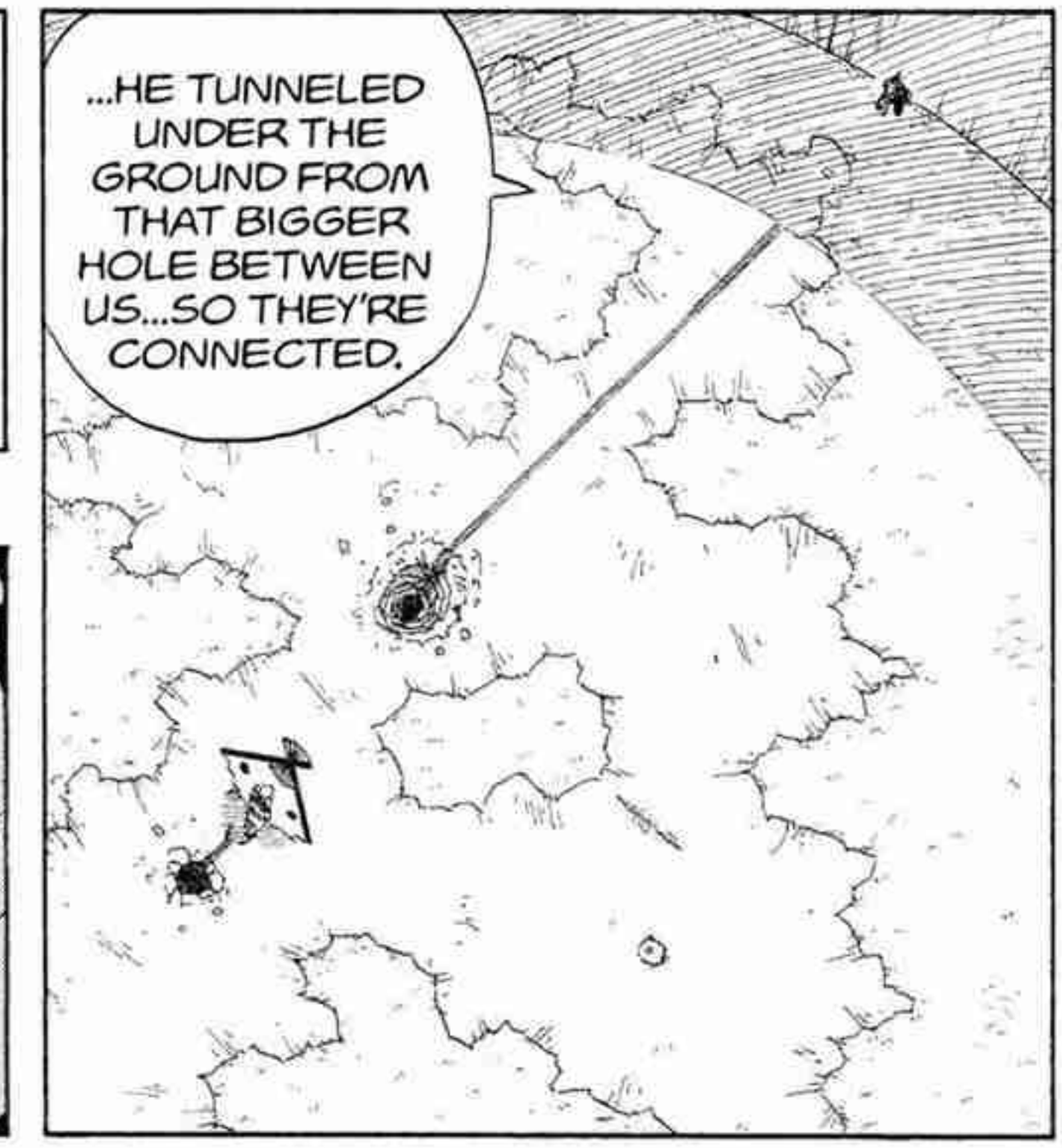

!
TH...THE HOLE...?!

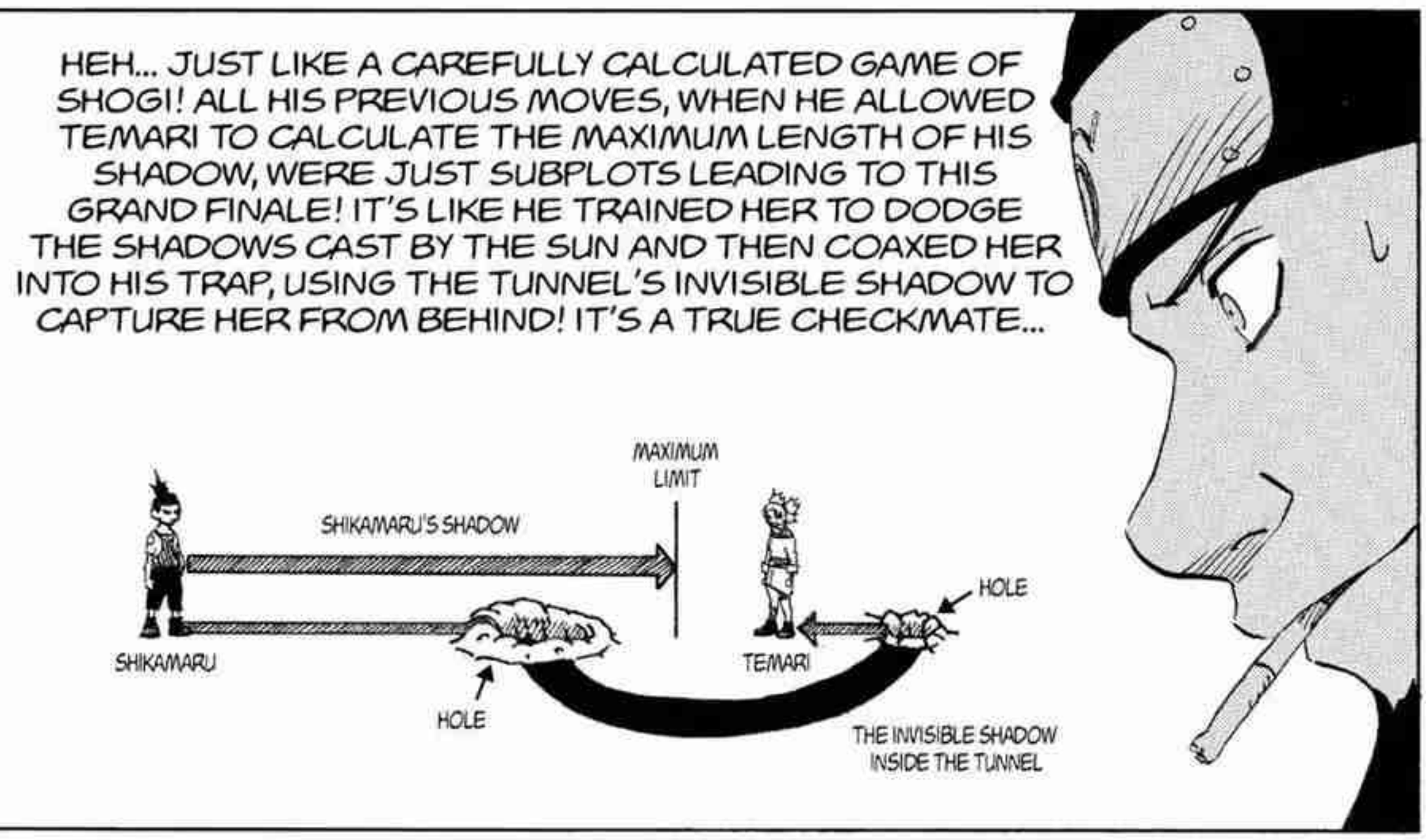
IN THE LAST BATTLE, NARUTO BURST OUT OF THAT HOLE TO ATTACK NEJI!
YOU SAW IT, DIDN'T YOU...?

READ
THIS
WAY


DON'T TELL ME... YOU USED THE SHADOW INSIDE THE TUNNEL BETWEEN THE TWO HOLES...?

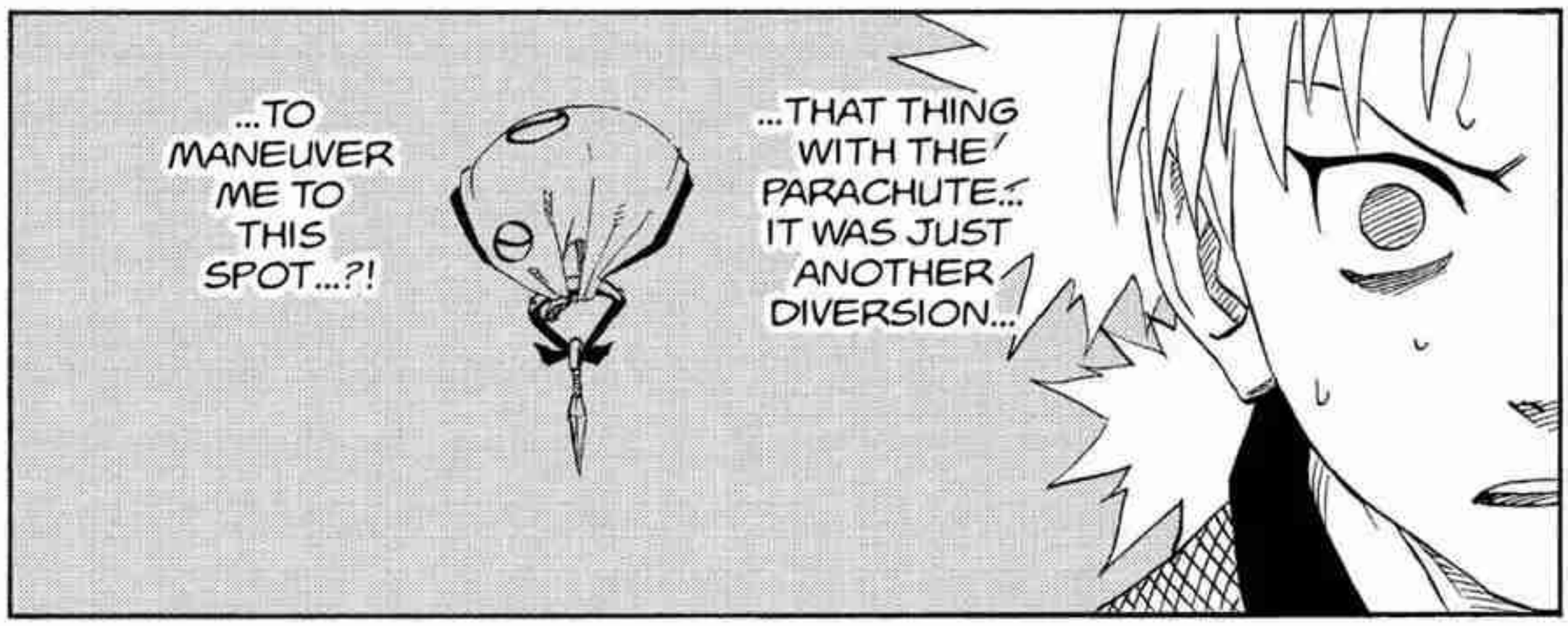
BINGO.
SHF


...HE TUNNELED UNDER THE GROUND FROM THAT BIGGER HOLE BETWEEN US...SO THEY'RE CONNECTED.


HEH... JUST LIKE A CAREFULLY CALCULATED GAME OF SHOGI! ALL HIS PREVIOUS MOVES, WHEN HE ALLOWED TEMARI TO CALCULATE THE MAXIMUM LENGTH OF HIS SHADOW, WERE JUST SUBPLOTS LEADING TO THIS GRAND FINALE! IT'S LIKE HE TRAINED HER TO DODGE THE SHADOWS CAST BY THE SUN AND THEN COAXED HER INTO HIS TRAP, USING THE TUNNEL'S INVISIBLE SHADOW TO CAPTURE HER FROM BEHIND! IT'S A TRUE CHECKMATE...
MAXIMUM LIMIT
SHIKAMARU'S SHADOW
HOLE
SHIKAMARU
TEMARI
HOLE
THE INVISIBLE SHADOW INSIDE THE TUNNEL

D...DON'T TELL ME...

...
UGH!


...TO MANEUVER ME TO THIS SPOT...?!
...THAT THING WITH THE PARACHUTE... IT WAS JUST ANOTHER DIVERSION...!

...YOU... YOU JERK...!

...
SNIRK
HIS NEXT MOVE WILL FINISH HER...

SHF

UGH!
TAK TAK
TAK TAK

!

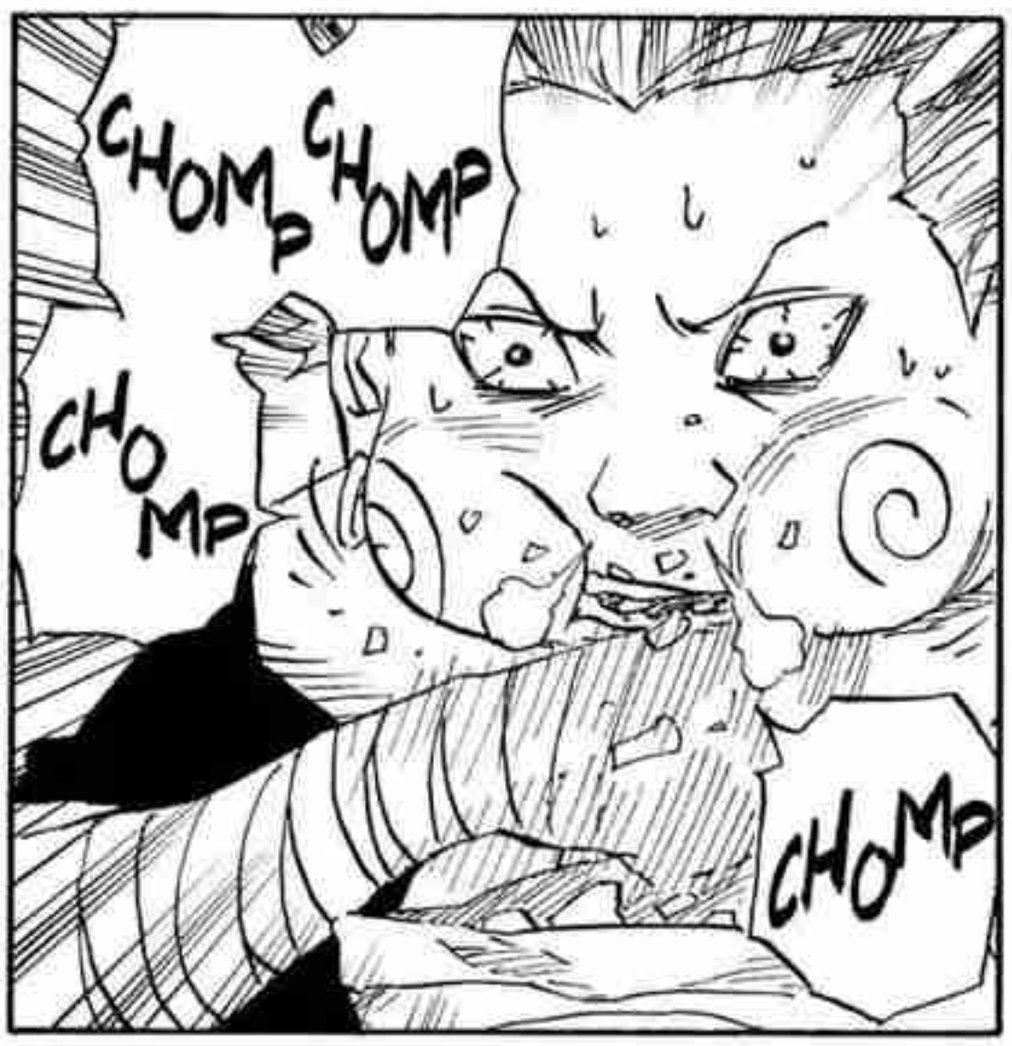
...

GULP

GO FOR IT!

ALL RIGHT! GET HER!

THIS KID WHO HADN'T MADE AN IMPRESSION ON ANYONE ENDS UP BEING A TOTAL DARK HORSE...
BEFORE THEY KNEW IT, THE WHOLE CROWD GOT WRAPPED UP IN THE MATCH...


CHOMP CHOMP
CHOMP
CHOMP

JAB

THAT'S IT... I'M DONE...

NG

...I GIVE UP!

TO BE CONTINUED IN NARUTO VOL. 13!